

Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims
in Iberia and Beyond

Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond

Edited by

Mercedes García-Arenal

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Preface to the New Edition

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This volume was first published as a special issue of the journal *Medieval Encounters* (Volume 24, No. 1–3, 2018), guest edited by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers. As they note in their introduction, its contents are based on some of the presentations delivered at a conference held in October, 2014 in Madrid. This and many other conferences and seminars have been organized in recent years at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas with the financial support of the European Research Council as part of the advanced research project, “Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics, Interaction” (CORPI), grant agreement 323316, PI García-Arenal. Some of the presentations at the 2014 conference have already been developed into book chapters and published in the collected volume *Polemical Encounters: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), also edited by García-Arenal and Wiegers. As I had the good fortune to participate in that conference and contribute to that collected volume, it also gave me great pleasure, as Editor-in-Chief of *Medieval Encounters*, to oversee the production of the related special issue as well. It now gives me equal satisfaction to have that issue published as a book in its own right, helping the valuable scholarship it contains to reach an even broader readership. The contents of this volume are mostly identical with those of the journal issue, but some bibliographic information has been updated, some errata have been corrected, and an index has been added. With this new edition of the *Medieval Encounters* issue “Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond,” we three editors aim to disseminate this important research to a wider body of scholars and to offer them a corrected and up-to-date version of the research it contains. I am confident that this book will provide a useful resource for ongoing research on medieval religious writing and cultural interaction and serve as a foundation for future studies.

Introduction

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Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond

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The articles gathered here were presented as lectures at the conference “Polemical Encounters: Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond,” which took place at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid in October 2014. This conference was organized by the editors of this volume under the auspices of the European Research Council’s Advanced Grant project CORPI.¹ The contributions included here are only a selection of the nearly thirty papers presented at the conference. The majority of the contributions focus on the time period often called the “long fifteenth century” (beginning with the 1391 pogroms and extending to the forced conversion of the Aragonese Muslims in 1526), a period—characterized by legal restrictions against Judaism and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula and by persecutions, conversions, and social violence, but also by cultural

¹ The conference was funded by the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) ERC advanced grant—grant agreement 323316—project CORPI (Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics, Interaction. Early Modern Iberia and Beyond), PI Mercedes García-Arenal, ILC-CCHS, CSIC, Spain.

See also the book edited by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *Polemical Encounters. Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018).

exchange—when the tension between assimilation and segregation reached its climax. It is a period that witnessed not only the disturbances in Toledo and Pedro Sarmiento's statute against converts (studied here by Giordano) but also the defense of the medieval status quo—Christian convivencia with Jews and Muslims—by the likes of the bishop of Ávila, Alonso de Madrigal, El Tostado (studied by Echevarría). It was a long century in which the physical and symbolic borders separating the three religions, while being transformed, remained extraordinarily porous—a time of unstable religious ideas and identities. In spite of religious prohibitions, the members of Iberia's different faiths interacted by means of commonly held notions, that is, they made use of religious ideas and symbols as ways of interrelating. This is the century that saw the founding of the Inquisition, the conquest of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews, and the various stages in the conversion of Muslims, when the border between the church and the synagogue had become tenuous and Islam continued to be officially recognized. At this time the *converso* problem—not only that of how to regard converts but also how to *be* a convert, how to know what to retain from one's old religion after conversion—was of primary importance. It was a century defined by confrontation and redefinition but also one in which the rigid turn taken by Spanish Catholicism had still not come to pass. The intensity of the debates presented in the following chapters shows that, during the long fifteenth century, other paths were still open and various solutions still seemed possible.

Efforts to convert Jews and Muslims, in addition to the defensive efforts of these communities to keep their members, led to the production of a considerable number of polemical texts. The forced conversions that took place in Iberia between the end of the fourteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth gave rise to crypto-Muslim and crypto-Jewish groups whose former identities, religious beliefs, and culture were attacked through the different kinds of texts and images that were discussed at the conference. These texts were not only Christian polemics directed against Judaism or Islam and their respective reactions: Jews and Muslims also wrote polemics against each other's religion. We were interested in focusing on religious polemics in a framework of shifting identities, languages, and both religious and erudite knowledge. Polemics against Islam and Judaism also provided the opportunity for Christians to clarify their own doctrines against competing Christian groups. This is because polemics do not usually serve primarily to convince an opponent, but rather to protect the religious identity of the group to which the polemicist belongs and his own religious authority among his co-religionists, who often constituted the most direct readership of his writings. Polemics

are also important from the point of view of knowledge transfer and are connected to the beginnings of Orientalism, as is shown by the contributions presented here that explore the connection between polemics and the origins of Arabic and Islamic studies and Hebrew and Judaic studies (studied by Starczewska and Freudenthal). Knowledge about Islam and Judaism also influenced the birth of comparative (religious) studies and the concept of religious tolerance among European elites. Various contributions (Giordano, Yisraeli, Starczewska) show how converts participated in this knowledge transfer and in religious polemics, often defending the spiritual assimilation and the legitimacy of the converts themselves.

Without a doubt—and this is the point that attracts most attention, as can be seen from the views about polemics of such scholars as Michel Foucault²—the genre of religious polemic is made up of texts that are vituperative, aggressive, and caustic. But during our three days of collaboration at the abovementioned conference, a different idea came to the fore, and it was this idea that guided the selection of articles presented in this volume. What the conference confirmed was that religious polemic is more than mere invective; it involves and produces familiarity, connectedness, scientific or pseudo-scientific exchange. To be sure, the kind of encounter and transmission that often takes place comes about willy-nilly and unconsciously, despite the intentions of the participants, and therefore only with difficulty can it be considered a “dialogue.” In fact, when it is detected, sometimes this (“lay” or popular) familiarity or friendship is considered dangerous (see the chapters by Tolan and Echevarría) and harmful, and those who engage in it come under the shadow of suspicion. At other times, it is consciously employed in the service of an ideological, cultural, and social strategy either by converts or, in a good many cases, by those who promoted the real integration of converts into Catholic society (Rodríguez Porto). Christianity itself took different forms in Iberia. In any case, it is precisely in “polemical” texts where we find evidence for the very thing that such texts were meant to avert. That is, these texts demonstrate that the borders between religions were not fixed and impenetrable. This was clearly not the case in fifteenth-century Iberia, nor was it really so even during later periods. The approach based on stable ethnic or religious divisions, as well as the aggressive tone of most polemical texts, has until now blinded historiography to the transversal logic of social and cultural intimacy, of a sort that is made manifest by the articles gathered in this volume.

² Michel Foucault, “Polemics, Politics and Problematisations,” in *Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, Vol. 1, *Ethics*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 111–19.

And yet, civil and religious authorities in the Middle Ages and early modern period perceived the risk posed by religious dispute insofar as it entailed proximity. This point is made in John Tolan's opening chapter in this volume, which deals with the legal and conciliar mandates that, beginning in the thirteenth century, prohibit and restrict interreligious disputes as part of an effort to regulate relations between Jews and Christians. Tolan demonstrates how these prohibitions against religious disputation are included among other prohibitions such as those against Jews having Christian servants or nursemaids, or against Christians having nursemaids from other religions (see also Pereda's contribution) or engaging in sexual relations with members of other religions, as if the disputes were an occasion for closeness and intimacy. Prohibiting disputes is part of an effort to stabilize relations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims and at the same time keep converts cut off from their former religion, thereby also safeguarding the faith of lay Christians. Iberian Muslims, both before and after their forced conversion to Catholicism, also alluded to Islamic restrictions against disputing about religion, as is pointed out time and again by Christian polemicists (such as Juan Andrés or Martín de Figuerola, who are dealt with in the chapter by Starczewska) who wanted to dispute with Aragonese Muslims. Disputation involved hearing attacks and blasphemy against one's own religion (as the theologians and clerics who were opposed to it pointed out), but it also entailed the implicit risk of having doubts sown, of gaining knowledge about another religion, its religious concepts and claims; in many ways, it entailed a dangerous closeness and intimacy. It required above all a discussion of religious representations and dogma (regarding the Trinity, for example), whose subtleties were not universally considered appropriate subjects for the uneducated, for those who did not have the benefit of enlightenment, as is shown by Yisraeli.

Echevarría's chapter approaches, from yet another angle, this issue of how the Middle Ages dealt with the existence of different religions within a single society and attempted to avoid familiarity among them. Her analysis of a particular episode that took place in a small town in the province of Toledo (Talavera de la Reina) around the middle of the fifteenth century—the conversion of a Muslim woman to Judaism (who, according to her defense, had been kidnapped and raped by her Jewish lover) and the ensuing scandal—draws attention to the desire on the part of the Christian authorities to maintain clearly defined borders between religious communities. Alonso Fernández de Madrigal, El Tostado, a famous man of letters (who would later become the bishop of Ávila), wrote an extraordinary text (in the genre *quaestio-responsio*) about this case in response to a legal consultation regarding the limits of religious jurisdiction and the legal responsibility of the different parties involved

in the conversion of the young woman. What was at stake here was compliance with the agreements signed with the minority religions, the role of the Church as the protector of legally recognized religious communities, and the definition of the role of civil or royal jurisdiction with respect to the minority communities' juridical and religious systems. El Tostado makes clear that the Jews and Muslims are allowed to live in error (that is, practice their own religion) because they were born into it and it belongs to them "by nature." However, if they abandon their nature, they can only do so by converting to Christianity and not to the other of the false religions, which he describes as "sects." In the case under consideration, conversion from Islam to Judaism involves an implicit rejection of Christianity and as such should be prohibited and the parties should be punished, both the young Muslim woman for having converted and the Jewish community for having welcomed her into their midst. However, the case ended with the woman's reversion to Islam without being punished by her community for apostasy, the sentence for which according to the "Moorish laws" of Castile was death. Both the court case and the text analyzed by Echevarría are extraordinary; they prove that at the middle of the fifteenth century the system of recognized religious communities—what El Tostado's text calls *cohabitatio*—was still considered valid, although it required segregation of the communities in order to function. The case also shows that the notion that one belongs to a religion by "nature" (expressed in ideas such as the "naturally Christian soul" or the Islamic "natural disposition of a human being"), i.e. by virtue of having been "born" as such, was already present in interreligious relations, ideas that would a few decades later play a role in the racialization of religion. The case of the young Muslim convert and her trial took place at the same time as the anti-convert riots in Toledo. It is no coincidence that El Tostado's text is preserved in the archive in the same binding as texts by Alonso de Cartagena, of whom we will speak shortly.

Bodily closeness and intimacy was to be avoided or regulated in various ways by the dominant religion, and respect for Christianity on the part of the Jewish and Islamic religions as well as mutual respect between the two minority groups had to be enforced. Everything related to the body and its functions (physical, dietary/digestive, sexual) becomes a field of contact and frequently also a battleground. And the body is cared for by the physician, a profession in which medieval Jews and Muslims excelled and were greatly esteemed, surpassing the Christians. The chapter by Freudenthal (the only one that does not deal with Iberia but rather with French Provence, a region that was closely related to Peninsular Judaism) focuses on polemical encounters between Christian and Jewish physicians, showing that profane science and the transmission of scientific knowledge were not without religious significance. The

juxtaposition of the reports on Jewish medicine with Latin university practices looks closely at positive effects of conflictive contact. In the transmission of not only medical but also astronomical knowledge (including chronologies and calendars), the religious factor was unavoidable. Calendars and the manner of dating texts themselves also appear charged with relevance in Gutwirth's essay. Freudenthal centers his study on translations (from the thirteenth century onward) of medical texts from Latin to Hebrew, translations that were not simple vehicles for transmitting neutral scientific knowledge but rather served to introduce Christian ideas into Jewish culture. To work in Latin and with the Latin language implied already from the outset the absorption of a whole universe of cultural notions and concepts. The Jewish translators—the first to have to confront this implicit religious material in scientific texts, which they frequently also confronted in their encounters with Christian medical colleagues—by virtue of their immersion in the Latin language opened a door that could eventually lead to conversion. Moreover, Jewish translators of medical texts from Latin to Hebrew were subjected to controversy on two fronts: the Christian physicians' animosity and competition on the one hand, and the resentment and censure of the traditionalist circles within their own community on the other. Conversion is also revealed as a way to avoid both of these sources of pressure. In fact, many of the translators that Freudenthal cites ended up converting to Christianity. Such was the case of Leon Joseph or Leonardus Benedictus, whose conversion can be situated within the web of interactions with Christian culture that was established beginning with his studies at the university, his medical practice, and his role as intermediary between the Jewish and Christian cultures.

The chapters by Echevarría and Freudenthal give us a sense of the local; they allow us to see the importance of the landscape and of the city/built environment. The following chapter, by Gutwirth, also demonstrates an assiduous interest in the local, beginning with an analysis of a specific locality, the city of Arévalo, in Castile, as a literary topos, telling the history of Arévalo through contemporary literature, and using literally shared local space as a justification for literary comparison of the works of a Jew, Yosef ibn Saddiq, and a Muslim known as the "Mancebo de Arévalo." Both wrote compilations and works of dissemination on their own religion and their cultural precepts at a time in which the very survival of Judaism and Islam in Iberia was threatened. Gutwirth argues that there are certain parallels and shared religious attitudes in the works of Ibn Saddiq and the Mancebo de Arévalo that can be explained by the specific background of the history of Arévalo in the fifteenth century. The uses of Hebrew sources in the *Aljamiado* text of the Mancebo for purposes that are not at all polemical are extraordinary and yet, in the context of the Mancebo's

Tafsira, they are not. Gutwirth's close reading of prologues, dedications, and colophons brings to the fore constructive and innovative aspects of polemics. He shows that a more thorough approach to the texts and ideas of the Judeo-Christian polemic will take into account the various factors of historical (legal, fiscal, economic, institutional) specificity impinging on their period and place. This close attention to the local as an explanation for certain aspects of specific polemics is also a feature of Glazer-Eytan's study, which looks at Daroca, and Pereda's and Rodríguez Porto's analyzes, which focus on Seville.

The next three chapters (Giordano, Yisraeli, Rodríguez Porto) are devoted to analyzes of specific texts and address the question of how dynamic the borders between Judaism, Christianity, and recent converts from one religion to the other were during this period (middle of the fifteenth century). These texts are indicative of a three-way conversation. The essays allude to another type of familiarity—the acquaintance that converts maintained with their old religion, its sacred texts, its modes of exegesis and argumentation—and the effect that this familiarity had on the converts' efforts to assimilate Christianity, or rather, to create a new Christianity. In the first two essays (by Yisraeli and Giordano) we hear a distinct *converso* voice that challenges the boundaries between Jewish and Christian groups. Thus, Yisraeli proposes a new reading of the polemical strategies used by the convert and bishop of Burgos, Pablo de Santa María—known before his conversion as Rabbi Salomon Ha-Levi—author of an anti-Jewish treatise entitled *Scrutinium scripturarum* (1432). Despite its virulence, the *Scrutinium* reflects a unique moment in the evolution of the polemic that takes place between converts and Jews and the different way of treating the spiritual assimilation of the former to their new Christian faith. Yisraeli demonstrates that Pablo's approach to rabbinic traditions and to putative Jewish skepticism differs profoundly from the scholastic polemical traditions that had been used, for example, in the famous Dispute of Tortosa. Yisraeli argues that as part of this specific polemic, the *Scrutinium* proposed themes and views that were generally unfamiliar to Christian scholastic literature and that, moreover, often subverted the aggressive polemical language of the Christian mission. The *Scrutinium* portrayed a Judaism that was essentially foreign to Christian readers and articulated novel ways to integrate rabbinic traditions into Christian history and scholarship. Not only rabbinic thought but above all the rabbinic way of reasoning infiltrates the Christian dialectic. The unique perspective born of his thorough knowledge of both Christian scholastic theology and the rabbinic disciplines permits Pablo de Santa María to present ideas based on Jewish biblical hermeneutics to his readership of Christian theologians in an oblique or implicit way, defending the Jewish origin of the Church, the value of Hebrew and rabbinic erudition,

and even the role of Jewish converts in the history of salvation. These are the ideas that shortly thereafter would give rise, in Iberia and Northern Europe, to what is known as “Christian Hebraism.”

To state this in other terms, the *Scrutinium scripturarum* constitutes an important witness in the debate between Jews and converts. It provides a missionizing ideology and polemical strategies to converts who championed spiritual assimilation to Christianity, among whom its author, Pablo de Santa María, was a well-known representative. This ideology held that Christianity was the materialization of Jewish ideals and emphasized those Christian teachings that made it possible to defend the idea that the two biblical covenants are in agreement. This proposition meant that conversion from Judaism to Christianity did not require a complete substitution of beliefs or identity but rather their perfection. It implied that there was a binding continuity and intimacy between the two religions. This extremely important proposition of Pablo de Santa María’s prefigures, as we mentioned, ideologies that would proliferate two centuries later in Northern Europe.

Giordano’s chapter focuses on the work of Pablo de Santa María’s son, who was born a Jew before his father’s conversion. Known after his conversion by the name Alonso de Cartagena, he likewise became a bishop and held very important positions at the Castilian court. His 1450 *Defensorium unitatis Christianae* is a polemic addressing not the Jews and their assimilation as converts to the Christian world but Christians who held that it was necessary to discriminate between Old and New Christians and to block New Christians from gaining privileges and social advancement because their Jewish origin carried *macula*, as opposed to *pulchritudo*. In the *Defensorium* we hear the voice of a convert speaking out against that particular rhetoric and in defense of non-discrimination on the basis of the Pauline understanding of Christianity. Cartagena uses the Bible’s own words as a sword in defense of the position of (Jewish) converts—converts who in turn defend the idea of a single Christian body unified by the grace conferred by baptism. Imbued with Pauline doctrine, Cartagena is a convert who is clearly familiar with the tenets of humanism as well as theological concepts like justification by faith and the *Beneficium Christi*. Like his father before him, Alonso defended or highlighted Christian teachings that support the notion of an agreement, a harmonious continuity between Judaism and Christianity, and he maintained that all Christians were converts, since all are changed into a new man at the moment of baptism. Against the idea of “pure blood,” Cartagena argues that all blood has been washed by the “blood of Christ” and that it is faith in Christ that guarantees salvation.

The next chapter analyzes a manuscript copy of a *Biblia romanceada*, that is, a Bible translated from Hebrew into the Castilian vernacular. Rather, the analysis centers on the illustrations contained in the splendid manuscript held at El Escorial, Ms. I.I.3. These illustrations make up an extraordinary pictorial cycle, a genuine visual narrative. The Bible belongs to a tradition of Bibles translated from Hebrew for a Christian readership and illuminated under the auspices of an aristocratic patron, a phenomenon that in itself is full of significance and worthy of further study. The particular manuscript studied here by Rodríguez Porto was, according to her article, commissioned in Seville by Enrique Pérez de Guzmán, second Duke of Medina Sidonia (d. 1492). Enrique Pérez de Guzmán had vigorously defended converts, retained converts among his entourage, and was part of a web of family members and clients that formed what we might call a “pro-convert” faction, possibly even a case of Christian Hebraism *avant la lettre*. He and his wife, Leonor Ribera y Mendoza, had family connections with other well-known figures who had commissioned illuminated Castilian Bibles—such as the famous Biblia de Alba or Arragel Bible, commissioned by Don Luis de Guzmán—and with Alonso de Guzmán, who had commissioned the translation of Lyra’s *Postillae* in 1420. The efforts of the Guzmán family and their associates and their interest in producing richly illustrated biblical translations from the Hebrew is an expression of their interest in a literal translation of the Bible. It is important to bear in mind the uniqueness of a certain medieval Spanish tradition that was closer to the Hebrew tradition than to the Vulgate, closer to the text of the Hebrew Bible than to the Church Fathers. This was a local tradition that ran parallel to Hispanic Judaism, which was more closely attached to the grammatical analysis of Scripture. The literal or historical reading created an exegetical juncture at which both Christian and Jewish writers were able to reach some common ground in their interpretation of the Bible, as is shown by the interest in Nicholas of Lyra’s *Postillae litteralis* attested for fifteenth-century Seville. We should remember here as well Pablo de Santa María’s interest in Lyra’s *Postillae*, for which he wrote numerous *Additiones* (Yisraeli). The explicit request by Don Luis de Guzmán for a Bible (known as the Biblia de Alba) provided with an up-to-date rabbinic commentary expanding on Lyra’s for the understanding of Scripture’s “obscure passages” should be considered as the other side of the same coin. Yet literal reading was also an intellectual pursuit in which the Bible study so cherished by Hieronymites, who made rumination on the Bible the core of their religious experience, could converge with the philological zeal shown by early humanists. That was the cultural and religious background of the Bible translations from Hebrew commissioned by aristocratic patrons in Castile. Jews and more often converts were at the

crossroads of this network but were not the sole intermediaries in this religious dialogue, especially from the end of the fifteenth century onwards, when the spirituality of New Christians had permeated different layers of society.

Rodríguez Porto shows how the extraordinary illustrations in the Escorial Bible have the ability to create their own historiographical discourse. For example, the struggle of the Jewish people against their enemies is made into a precedent for or a counterpart of the feats achieved by the Castilians against Granada (which was at that time still under Islamic rule but in the last stages of its conquest by the Christians), of the struggle of the Christians against Islam, making the Christians in effect into the “new chosen people.” The richest pictorial cycles in the manuscript studied by Rodríguez Porto are those that illustrate the books of Maccabees and Esther. Enrique de Guzmán, a descendent of Guzmán el Bueno (conqueror of Tarifa from the Muslims) and Count of Niebla, fancied himself something of a champion not unlike Joshua or Judah Maccabee. The illustrations support, as Rodríguez Porto shows, a continuity between the Jewish people and all the Christian faithful (without regard to their origin), united in the struggle against the infidel. Especially significant is the pictorial cycle dedicated to Queen Esther, which seems to transform the biblical past into a mirror of the present tragedy—the Inquisition having been recently established and in operation in Seville—making the eyes of the converts and their defenders look to Queen Isabella, in the form of a new Esther, imploring her protection.

The literal translation of the Bible and knowledge of Hebrew emerge here as fundamental concerns in Iberia at the end of the Middle Ages and the dawn of Modernity. The relationship between Judaism and Christianity, a crucial and pressing problem, is articulated through the way Spaniards during this period deal with the Hebrew language.

Thus, Glazer-Eytan explores the complex uses of Hebrew letters and writing in late medieval Christian art. He focuses on an inscription in Hebrew—which he analyzes as both image and text—that appears in the *Piedat* (painted c. 1474, at almost the same time as the Escorial Bible studied by Rodríguez Porto was produced) by the painter Bartolomé de Cárdenas, El Bermejo. Bermejo himself and the Darocan milieu in which he was working and living were suspected of being *conversos* at the end of the fifteenth century. This is also the view held by modern scholars of Bermejo, who saw in it an explanation for the peculiar Hebrew inscription.

Glazer-Eytan’s highly suggestive revisiting of this painting in its local context relates the inscription—which contains a Christological text that paraphrases Paul and Augustine—not so much to the painter’s and the patron’s *converso* origins but to the general fascination with the Hebrew language, and

to a unique iconographical tradition of the Man of Sorrows in Aragon that used pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on Christ's sepulcher. He thus looks at the *Piedad* as a visual attempt to situate Christ's tomb in an ancient "East" imagined as the historical and religious roots of Christianity. This visual argument is accompanied by a polemical textual argument that appropriates Hebrew from Judaism and uses it to sacralize and archaize Christianity. Glazer-Eytan therefore argues that it is not a pro-*converso* painting; it is a polemic with Judaism and it has a humanistic-Hebraistic agenda that was, in a way, a polemic with the more conservative, traditional Catholicism that favored Latin and avoided Hebrew.

In our view, the pictorial representation of a Hebrew phrase also reflects the fascination with humanity's and the chosen people's primeval language and the search for sacred, ancient origins that are distinctively Hispanic. The tomb united the entire Christian community with Christ and at the same time was a symbolic fabrication that served to situate sacred history in the ancient Jews' own territory. As Glazer-Eytan shows, this painting, with its specific context in Daroca's devotional life through the relation it had to the town's famous miraculous bloodstained corporals, had also broader, universal resonances. The Eucharistic connotations of the image and its salvational message, conveyed through the medium of Hebrew letters, were a universal Christian message.

These four, highly interwoven texts (Yisraeli, Giordano, Rodríguez Porto, Glazer-Eytan) all make reference to the polemical encounter between Judaism and Christianity as mediated by the *converso* question. And this is because the fifteenth century is a century defined by this question. The (forced) conversions of Muslims, who were afterward called Moriscos, took place during the following century, the sixteenth, but were remarkably similar. Starczewska's chapter demonstrates this similarity by bringing to light the same issues: the translation of the Qur'ān and its glosses in a polemical environment and the role (and the knowledge) of recent converts in this polemic. Starczewska analyzes the role of the *alfaquí* convert Juan Gabriel as the translator and teacher of the Aragonese polemicist and missionary Martín de Figuerola, on the one hand, and the translator and glosser of the Qur'ān for the Italian cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, on the other. In this chapter as well, we note the importance of the local context for generating different polemics and encounters, since Starczewska suggests that Juan Gabriel had a different attitude toward texts when he worked in Aragon with Christian missionaries than when he worked outside that context in Italy, even when he worked with the same Qur'ānic verses. When collaborating with Figuerola, he provided him with exegetical material that would be appropriate for use in an anti-Muslim polemical context, whereas the exegesis that he worked on in Italy sought to bring to light the features of Islam that are most compatible with Christianity. In Italy, Juan

Gabriel attempted to blur the boundaries between Christianity and Islam and to present them as a continuity. For example, he defended the idea that the patriarch Abraham/Ibrahim, who was venerated by his patron, Egidio, was really a “Catholic” prophet, and therefore a place might be found for Islam within Christendom. This is a very similar strategy to the ones used, as we have seen, by Jewish converts or by those who defended converts, including the strategy of presenting Judaism and Christianity as united in a common struggle against Islam. It can be deduced that both minority religions—Judaism and Islam—appealed to the same arguments and the same ideology, giving priority to the question of origins in an attempt to present themselves as united to Christianity in their origins and opposed to a common enemy: Islam or Judaism, respectively. In any case, there were Morisco efforts, such as the Sacromonte Lead Books (see Pereda’s chapter), that made use of strategies similar to those pointed out by Starczewska and Glazer-Eytan and that were part of Iberia’s intellectual current at the time: the search for sacred origins and ancient origins, the connection of this antiquity with the East, specifically an East that was passed down through the Bible but that could also be used to maintain that Christianity was the materialization of Islam’s ideals or that Islam fulfilled or completed Christian ideals. And if not, then that Islam, or at least the Arabs, who originated in the East out of various ancient Arabic-speaking peoples (supposedly Arabic-speaking biblical tribes who came to Iberia such as the Edomites and Phoenicians) gave Spaniards a sacred origin and helped to make them a new chosen people.

Attaining salvation was a problem that had an immediate social implication in the question of how to integrate converts into Catholicism. And here is where the questions of blood, milk, “nature,” purity, and stain arise. As Pablo de Santa María said (*Yisraeli*), converts were “newborn infants, longing for pure, spiritual milk through which they may grow into salvation.” These newborn infants or “brothers in milk” are at the forefront of the painter Juan Roelas’s work *Alegoría de la Inmaculada Concepción*, which is analyzed by Pereda, and of the interpretation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception put forward by Juan de Roelas’s painting. The believers in the Immaculate Conception wanted to press Rome to declare it a Catholic article of faith: Mary had been conceived without original sin. Pereda explores the way that the idea/symbol (though not the dogma approved by Rome in a later period) of the Immaculate Conception was defended in Seville by Pedro de Castro (the same archbishop who championed the Lead Books of Sacromonte, Arabic texts that extolled the idea of the Immaculate Conception) and how the Immaculate Conception can be opposed to the idea of blemish and stained blood. The Immaculate Virgin was thus transformed into a symbol of a single, uniform, and impermeable

social body comprising all Christians, Old and New. Felipe Pereda is in fact speaking of another polemic in a different local context, this time between Dominicans (against the belief of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and for that reason also against the Lead Books) and defenders of the belief of the Immaculate Conception in Seville at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He analyzes the racial anxiety underlying the conflict between the dogma (which the Spanish monarchy had endorsed since the Middle Ages) and the Dominican order, which boasted of having “no Jews, no Moors, no Moriscos, no Mulattoes like in all other religious orders” (including the Jesuits). The question is no longer just about converts, but also Indians, Blacks, and Mulattoes. It is no longer confined to medieval Iberia, but extends across the global Empire (the ideal republic). Through his reading of Juan de Roelas’s painting *Alegoría de la Inmaculada Concepción*, Pereda connects the dogma of Mary’s transcendent purity to the social and racial prejudices from which that belief arose in the specific context of Seville and above all draws attention to what the dogma of Mary’s purity implies for the creation of an “imagined community” nourished by the Virgin’s pure, spiritual milk, a universal community of Christians free from the racial prejudices represented by blood.

CHAPTER 1

Ne De Fide Presumant Disputare: Legal Regulations of Interreligious Debate and Disputation in the Middle Ages

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Abstract

On March 4th, 1233, in his bull *Sufficere debuerat perfidie Iudeorum*, Pope Gregory IX complains to the bishops and archbishops of Germany of the many “perfidies” of the German Jews, including their “blasphemies” against the Christian religion, which, he fears, may have an ill effect on Christians, particularly converts from Judaism. He orders the bishops to prohibit Jews from presuming to dispute with Christians and to prevent Christians from participating in such disputation through ecclesiastical censure.

Gregory clearly thought that it was dangerous to allow informal discussions or debates about religion between Jews and Christian laymen. At the same time, he was instrumental in the promotion of the two new mendicant orders and in the encouragement of their missionary efforts towards Jews (and to a lesser extent Muslims). Over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Dominicans in particular became specialists of religious disputation. Laymen were increasingly discouraged or prohibited from engaging in such disputation by both ecclesiastical and royal legislation.

This article will examine several key texts involving the dangers of interreligious debate and discussion in the Middle Ages from the perspective of Christian authorities (ecclesiastical, royal or other). Various authors, from Tertullian to Joinville, expressed misgiving about the effects such debate could have on Christian participants and bystanders, and various medieval legal texts, civil and canon, sought to limit or prohibit such debate.

Keywords

disputation – ecclesiastical authority – anti-Judaism – Christianity – mandate of the king

The question was not new in the thirteenth century. On the contrary, medieval authors were aware of treatment of the issue by Patristic authors. Perhaps the earliest reference to the dangers of Christians debating with Jews we owe to Tertullian (d. 220). He says that one day a Jewish proselyte and a Christian had a debate:

It happened very recently that a debate was held between a Christian and a proselyte Jew. Through the tug-of-war exchange between them, they dragged the day into evening. Also, through the clamouring from some supporters of both individuals, the truth was being obscured as if by a cloud. Therefore, as a full explanation was impossible on account of everyone speaking at once, it was decided to settle the questions that have been reconsidered in writing, after a more careful examination of the texts.¹

Scholars have speculated that Tertullian may be referring to a disputation that he had witnessed in the streets of Carthage. For Richard Lim, the Christian disputant may have been Tertullian himself. In any case, Tertullian was clearly not content with the outcome of the dispute and he sat down to write out his version of what should have been said in his *Adversus Judaeos*.² The point is that for Tertullian and his readers, daily contact and discussion between Jews and Christians was a given and that this kind of theological dispute was at least seen as plausible. And it represented a clear danger, whence the need for a text to quell the doubts inspired by Jewish infidelity and offer Christians appropriate responses to Jewish arguments.

While Tertullian's reaction took the form of literary polemics, we find the same sort of preoccupations in accounts of early Church councils. In the fourth century, various bishops and councils expressed worries about the dangers of disputing with infidels, in particular heretics. In 381, the Council of Aquileia anathematized Arian bishops Palladius and Secundianus. Bishop Ambrose of Milan warned the council of the rhetorical skills of the accused and succeeded in preventing the council from turning into a disputation.³ As Richard Lim has shown, this is part of a larger shift in the fourth century from oral

¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1964). Geoffrey D. Dunn trans., *Tertullian* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 68–69.

² Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 4–7; Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian's Aduersus Iudaeos: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

³ Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 20; Lim, *Public Disputation*, 219–20.

performance in the councils to the redaction of documents representing the council's consensus. Even within the church, disputation could be divisive. The 431 Council of Ephesus brought to a head rivalries between Cyril of Alexandria, Pope Celestine and imperial authorities.⁴ In order to attempt to restore peaceful cooperation, emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian write:

It is necessary that priests be admired both for the goodness of their morals and for the rigor of their faith; that they daily manifest the simplicity of their life and know the nature of any problem and betake themselves to discover the true doctrine with respect to religion chiefly by means of research rather than by arrogant disputations concerning words.⁵

In the wake of the Council of Chalcedon (451), presided by Emperor Marcian, which established the dual nature of Christ (human and divine) as a fundamental doctrine, Marcian promulgated two laws (in January and February 452) affirming that the bishops assembled at Chalcedon had established "a clear definition of what must be observed in religion" and henceforth ordering that "the profane contention should cease from now on."⁶ The aim is to put an end to Christological disputes within the church, and the law threatens: "Punishment against those condemning this law shall not be lacking, because they not only go out against the well-established faith, but also profane by this contention the venerable mysteries in front of Jews and pagans." This law is reiterated in the *Codex Justinianus* (1.1.4). Here it is religious argument *among Christians* which is prohibited, but one of the reasons brought forward is that such exposition of disagreement among Christians is the profanation of the faith in the eyes of Jews and pagans. To argue about doctrine instead of accepting the authority of the Church is to risk profaning the faith, all the more so in the presence of infidels.

Pope Gregory IX, Letter to the Archbishops and Bishops of Germany (March 4th, 1233)

In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, various Latin Christian writers express concerns about the potential dangers of laymen or poorly prepared clerics disputing with Jews or heretics. In the 1190s, Peter of Blois warns in his

⁴ Lim, *Public Disputation*, 220–26.

⁵ Translation by Lim, *Public Disputation*, 221.

⁶ Ammon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 337–55, here at 344.

Against the Perfidies of the Jews that “as a result of illicit and careless debates, a virulent crop of heresies runs wild.”⁷ Odo of Sully, archbishop of Paris (1197–1208), in an addendum to synodal rules issued c. 1200, states: “Laymen shall, under pain of excommunication, be forbidden ever to dare dispute (*presumant disputare*) with Jews about the articles of the Christian faith.”⁸

Yet it is in particular during the pontificate of Gregory IX (1227–41) that we see a renewed concern with the dangers of Christian laymen disputing with Jews. In March of 1227 the Council of Treves ruled that, “ignorant clergymen shall not dispute with Jews in the presence of laity.”⁹ Granted, this is part of a long list of measures meant to regulate the behavior of the clergy and bring it in line with reforms promoted by Gregory’s predecessors, notably Innocent III and Honorius III. Among the other measures promulgated at Treves was the obligation for prelates to properly receive (*beginne recipiatis*) the Franciscan and Dominican friars who came to their dioceses (and whose presence often caused rivalry and resentment). While the two measures (properly receiving friars and prohibiting ignorant clergy from debating with Jews before laymen) were not explicitly linked, they would be during Gregory’s pontificate: it was friars, particularly Dominicans, who would be charged with the task of disputing with Jews—and Muslims—and preaching to them.¹⁰

In a similar vein, in 1233, the Council of Tarragona forbade that “any lay person dispute about the Catholic faith whether publicly or privately. Whoever shall be found acting contrary to our prohibition shall be excommunicated by his own bishops, and, unless he purges himself, shall be suspected of heresy.”¹¹

7 Peter of Blois, *Contra perfidiam Iudeorum* (PL 207), 825; translation from Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture*, 191.

8 Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century: A Study of Their Relations during the Years 1198–1254, Based on the Papal Letters and the Conciliar Decrees of the Period* (New York: Hermon Press, 1966), 300–01; translation from Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture*, 190.

9 Joannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 53 vols. (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1960–62), 23: col. 33; text and translation from Grayzel, *The Church*, 318–19. See Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture*, 190.

10 On the role of Dominican missionaries in preaching to Jews, see Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also my review of Vose in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 21 (2010): 200–01.

11 Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 23:329; translation from Grayzel, *The Church*, 1:324–25; see Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture*, 191. This council of Tarragona is dated 1235 in *Cortes de los Antiguos Reinos de Aragón y de Valencia y Principado de Cataluña. Tomo 1. Primera parte: Cortes de Cataluña (1064 al 1327)* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1896), 123.

Here the preoccupation is principally heresy, as is made clear in the canons that follow.

Gregory himself deals explicitly with this issue in a letter he sends to the German clergy on March 4, 1233. The prohibition against disputation is inserted at the end of this long letter and indeed comes almost as an afterthought. The letter shows how, for Gregory, Jewish predilection for argument with Christians is one of the many ways in which Jews seek to undermine the Christian faith. To understand this context, let us take a close look at this letter in its entirety.¹²

The Pope addresses his letter to the “archbishops, bishops and other prelates of the Church of Germany.” He opens with the following affirmation:

It should have been enough for the perfidy of the Jews that Christian piety receives and tolerates them purely out of kindness, while even they who persecute the Catholic Faith, and who do not know the name of God, do not admit them into neighborliness or companionship. Yet the Jews, ungrateful for the favors and forgetful of benefits, return insult for kindness, and a reward of impious contempt for goodness; they, who out of mercy only are admitted into intimacy with us, and who ought to know the yoke of perpetual enslavement because of their guilt!

This is a fairly classic expression of the theology of Jewish servitude for the sin of having killed Christ, found in particular in a number of letters of Innocent III, for example his *Etsi non dispiceat Domino*, addressed to King Philip II of France in 1205, or his *Ut esset Cain*, sent to the Count of Nevers in 1208.¹³ Jews are condemned to servitude for failing to recognize Jesus as their Messiah, yet they are allowed to live among Christians. Even the persecutors of Christians do not tolerate the presence of Jews as we do (an indirect reference, via Innocent's *Etsi Iudeos*, to the Almohads, who expelled Christians and Jews from their territories).¹⁴ Yet instead of showing the proper gratitude, their “perfidy” expresses itself in various forms of “impious contempt,” which the pope then sets out to enumerate.

¹² The text of this letter is in Georg Heinrich Pertz, *Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883), 1:414.

¹³ For the Latin text, translation, and commentary of these texts, see <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait30385/> and <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait30493/>. On these texts, see John Tolan, “Of Milk and Blood: Innocent III and the Jews, Revisited,” in *Jews and Christians in Thirteenth-Century France*, ed. Elisheva Baumgarten and Judah Galinsky (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 139–49.

¹⁴ <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait30352/>.

The first manifestation of Jewish “insolence” that he condemns is their employment of Christian servants in their homes, which was indeed a common practice in much of Europe and was consistently condemned (seemingly to little avail) by a variety of ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁵ The term Gregory uses is *mancipia*, more properly “slaves,” and indeed Church legislation on this matter is in continuity with Roman laws prohibiting Jews from circumcising their slaves and from owning Christian slaves.¹⁶ In thirteenth-century Latin Europe, it would have been impossible for Jews to own Christian slaves: however, they did fairly frequently employ Christians as household servants. Often these servants were women, which created concern that they could be sexually intimate with Jewish men and be pressured to apostatize. While fear of apostasy is merely implicit in many of these texts, it is explicit here, as Gregory affirms that Jews force Christian servants to accept circumcision and to convert to Judaism. Gregory is particularly incensed by the ways in which Jews purportedly treat their “Christian nurses and maid-servants in their homes” against whom they commit “enormities that are an abomination and a horror to hear.” The pope is no doubt thinking of the accusation made by his predecessor Innocent III, in the bull *Etsi Iudeos*, that Jews make their wet-nurses pour their milk into the latrine after they have taken communion.¹⁷ Gregory, like Innocent III before him, is exaggerating (consciously or no) the dangers presented by cohabitation between Christian servants and Jewish masters in order to affirm in the strongest possible way the prohibition of such practices. He similarly denounces the fact that “blasphemers” (a category for him which includes Jews) exercise public office and other positions of authority over Christians (another standard preoccupation) and that the Jews of Germany do not dress in a distinct and recognizable manner, despite the ruling of the Council of Lateran IV, which obliged them to do so.

It is only then, at the end of this letter, that Gregory addresses the issue that interests us: he orders the bishops to prohibit Jews from debating with Christians.

You are to prohibit most stringently that they should at any time dare to dispute with Christians about their faith or their rites, lest under pretext

¹⁵ See, for example, the eighteen texts on this issue in the RELMIN database: http://www.cn-telma.fr//relmin/resultats/?typeRecherche=extraits&ID=&TITRE_TEXTE_ORIGINAL=&TITRE=&TITRE_DESCRIPTIF=&MOT_CLE%5B%5D=servants.

¹⁶ See, for example, <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extraiti03892/>; <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extraiti36963/>; <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extraiti252285/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extraiti30352/>; see Tolan, “Of Milk and Blood.”

of such disputation the simple-minded slide into a snare of error, which God forbid. You may call in for this purpose, if necessary, the aid of the secular arm, restraining Christian opponents by ecclesiastical punishments, and Jews by removing communication with the faithful, without appeal.¹⁸

Pope Gregory, then, asks his German bishops to prohibit Jews from disputing with Christians. This is a somewhat unusual formulation, since theoretically the bishops have no jurisdiction over Jews; hence one would expect him to prohibit *Christians* from debating with Jews. The danger is that the “simple-minded,” presumably either those who debate ineptly or those who listen to such debates, may be led into error. The danger seems to be less of a preoccupation than the classic (and much more commonly voiced) dangers represented by Jews having Christian servants in their homes, enjoying positions of authority over Christians, or failing to wear distinctive clothing. But we find the preoccupation recurring on a number of occasions in the thirteenth century. This prohibition was repeated by Pope Alexander IV (1254–61), though only with mention of heretics, not Jews.¹⁹

This does not of course mean that there is no disputation at all. On the contrary, a number of educated clerics, in particular Dominicans, sought out debate with Jews and at times gained the help of royal authority in order to force understandably reluctant Jews to debate with them. The two most famous thirteenth-century examples are the Talmud trial in Paris in 1240 (which led to the burning of large numbers of Jewish books) and the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263. Yet each of these was closely controlled and limited: in Paris, the question was whether the Talmud contained blasphemies against Christ and the Virgin (and *pace* a later Hebrew text that presents a disputation between Jews and Christians, it is not clear whether Jews were given any chance to respond to what seems to have been an inquisitorial trial against the Talmud).²⁰ In Barcelona the issue was whether the Talmud contained proof that the Messiah had already come. In both cases, the Dominicans and their royal sponsors (Louis IX of France and Jaime I of Aragon) were careful to keep

¹⁸ Pertz, *Epistolae saeculi*, 1:414; <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait326307/>.

¹⁹ Grayzel, *The Church*, 2:67; Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture*, 191.

²⁰ Robert Chazan et al., *The Trial of the Talmud, Paris, 1240* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012).

the debate closely controlled and not to allow the Jewish disputants to turn it into an attack on Christianity.²¹

Henry III of England Mandate of the King to the Justices Assigned to the Custody of the Jews (1253)

On January 31, 1253, King Henry III of England issued a mandate in which Jews were prohibited both from disparaging the Christian faith and from disputing with Christians about it. Once again, these prohibitions were part of a broad effort to regulate Jewish behavior and in particular Jewish-Christian relations. Here is the translation of the mandate:

Mandate of the King to the Justices assigned to the custody of the Jews touching certain statutes relating to the Jews in England which are to be rigorously observed, the thirty-seventh year of King Henry, AD 1253. The King has provided and ordained etc. That no Jew remain in England unless he do the King service, and that from the hour of birth every Jew, whether male or female, serve Us in some way. And that there be no synagogues of the Jews in England save in those places in which such synagogues were in the time of King John, the King's father. And that in their synagogues the Jews, one and all, subdue their voices in performing their ritual offices, that Christians may not hear them. And that all Jews answer to the rector of the church of the parish in which they dwell touching all dues parochial relating to their houses. And that no Christian nurse in future suckle or nourish the male child of any Jew, nor any Christian man or woman serve any Jew or Jewess, or eat with them or tarry in their houses. And that no Jew or Jewess eat or buy meat in Lent. And that no Jew disparage the Christian Faith, or publicly dispute concerning the same. And that no Jew have secret familiar intercourse with any Christian woman, and no Christian man with a Jewess. And that every Jew wear his badge conspicuously on his breast. And that no Jew enter any church or chapel save for purpose of transit, or linger in them in dishonour of Christ. And that no Jew place any hindrance in the way of another Jew desirous of

²¹ The bibliography on these two events is considerable. For a good recent study, with reference to the bibliography, see Harvey J. Hames, "Reconstructing Thirteenth-Century Jewish-Christian Polemic: From Paris 1240 to Barcelona 1263 and Back Again," in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szepiech (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 115–27.

turning to the Christian Faith. And that no Jew be received in any town but by special license of the King, save only in those towns in which Jews have been wont to dwell. And the Justices assigned to the custody of the Jews are commanded that they cause these provisions to be carried into effect, and rigorously observed on pain of forfeiture of the chattels of the said Jews. Witness the King at Westminster, on the 31st day of January. By King and Council.²²

In this mandate, as in Gregory's letter, the prohibition of Jews "publicly disputing the faith" is issued amidst a long series of regulations and restrictions concerning the Jews' place in Christian society. The King affirms his authority over Jews while at the same time lending royal authority to various measures concerning Jews taken by church councils in Rome (Lateran III, 1179, and Lateran IV, 1215) and in England (Oxford, 1222, among others).²³ The king begins by affirming that no Jew, of whatever age or sex, may remain in England unless he provides service to the king. This is a strong affirmation of the direct dependency of Jews on the person of the king. There is a clear desire to limit expansion of Jewish settlement and to prohibit building of new synagogues. A series of stipulations echo measures taken at the Council of Oxford in 1222: Jews are prohibited from having Christian servants and from sexual relations with Christians, and they are obliged to pay tithes on their lands and houses to the parish rector and to wear a badge in the shape of "tablets" (probably, as at Oxford, referring to the tablets of the Law that Moses received at Sinai).

While many of the measures in this mandate had been the object of canons in previous church councils, here Henry III lends royal authority to these laws and specifically instructs his royal justiciars to enforce these laws, if necessary through the seizure of Jews' property. For Robin Mundill, this mandate "redefined the conditions under which Jews could live.... The Jews were no longer in England by invitation with special privilege. They were now in England to be

²² Latin text and English translation from James M. Rigg, *Select Pleas, Starrs, and Other Records from the Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews, A.D. 1220–1284* (London: B. Quaritch, 1902), xlviii–xlvi. For an online version of the full Latin text, English and French translations, commentary, and bibliography, see <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait252152/>.

²³ On this mandate and the context explaining the adoption by the king of restrictions on Jews previously issued by English Church councils, see David Carpenter, "Magna Carta 1253: The Ambitions of the Church and the Divisions Within the Realm," *Historical Research* 86 (2013): 179–90; Robert Stacey, "The English Jews under Henry III," in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2003), 41–54. For the Oxford council, see <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/auteur1816/>.

exploited and directed at the King's whim.”²⁴ It marks an important step in the increasing royal control and restriction of Jewish communities in England. As David Carpenter has shown, this mandate must be understood as a conciliatory gesture towards the English bishops at a time when he sought their approval for a crusading tithe on ecclesiastical property in England.

Whereas Gregory aired fears that Jews disputing with Christians could lead to a weakening of the faith of the “simple-minded,” Henry associates such debates with blasphemy and disparagement of the Christian religion.

Thomas Aquinas, “Whether One Ought to Dispute with Unbelievers in Public?” (1265–74)

Thomas of Aquinas addresses this issue in his *Summa theologica* when he raises the question “Whether one ought to dispute with unbelievers in public.”²⁵ In keeping with the scholastic form of the *Summa*, Thomas first voices objections (which might lead one to answer no to the question), then gives his answer to the question (in this case, a qualified yes), and finally gives his answers to each of the objections.

On the question of whether one ought to dispute publicly with infidels, Thomas raises three objections. First, he cites Paul (2 Tim. 2:14): “Contend not in words, for it is to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.” Since public disputation cannot be done without contending in words, it would seem that one should not engage in it. Furthermore, Thomas (giving his second objection) cites the 452 law of Marcian which (as we have seen) sought to quash debate about Christian doctrine in the wake of the Council of Chalcedon. Thomas emphasizes that this law was confirmed by the canons of the Church councils (*per canones confirmata*) and cites the following excerpt of the law: “It is an insult to the judgment of the most religious synod, if anyone ventures to debate or dispute in public about matters which have once been judged and disposed of.” Since, Thomas says, all matters of faith have been decided by the holy councils, it is therefore an “insult to the councils and a grave sin to presume to dispute in public about matters of faith.” Finally, in his third objection, Thomas says, “disputations are conducted by means of arguments. But an

²⁴ Robin R. Mundill, *The King's Jews: Money, Massacre and Exodus in Medieval England* (London: Continuum, 2010), 151.

²⁵ *Summa theologica* II2, q10, art. 7; translation from *The “Summa theologica” of St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Burns, Oates and Washburne, 1920) (available online: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3010.htm>).

argument is a reason in settlement of a dubious matter: whereas things that are of faith, being most certain, ought not to be a matter of doubt. Therefore one ought not to dispute in public about matters of faith." Thomas thus gives three reasons not to debate the faith publicly with infidels. Moreover, the three objections invoke three separate sources of authority: the Bible, law, and reason.

After his three objections, Thomas cites a contrary biblical authority in support of answering yes to the question. Citing Acts (9:22, 29), Thomas notes that Paul disputed with both Jews and gentiles and "confounded" them, which suggests that disputation can be licit and useful.

Thomas concludes first of all that, in order for a disputation to be permissible, the Christian disputant must be participating in the dispute for the right reasons: not out of doubt, but in order to combat error. Furthermore, care should be taken lest the Christian audience's faith become weakened rather than strengthened through the debate. Those whose faith is not firm may be "provoked and molested by unbelievers, for instance, Jews or heretics, or pagans who strive to corrupt the faith in them." It can thus be "dangerous to dispute in public about the faith, in the presence of simple people, whose faith for this very reason is more firm, that they have never heard anything differing from what they believe." Finally, Thomas answers each of the three objections. First, the biblical: "The Apostle does not entirely forbid disputations, but such as are inordinate, and consist of contentious words rather than of sound speeches." Second, the legal objection: Marcian's law forbade public disputation arising from doubting the faith, not that which is meant to defend it (indeed, as we have seen, the goal was to quash debate about the decisions taken at Chalcedon). Third, the logical: one may dispute about the faith not out of doubt but in order to make the truth known and to confute errors, says Thomas, who affirms that in order to defend the faith it is sometimes necessary to dispute with non-believers.

Thomas's reflection echoes the logic of Gregory's bull and offers what seem to be clear criteria to distinguish illicit from licit disputation. Here again, as we have seen in texts since Tertullian at the turn of the third century, disputation has to be undertaken with caution lest it backfire and lead to the weakening of the faith of Christians.

Jean de Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis* (1309)

Disputation with infidels thus can be beneficial and necessary, but it needs to be done only in the proper circumstances. We find echoes of this idea well beyond the realms of law and theology. Indeed, we see this same idea expressed

by Jean de Joinville, companion of Louis IX (1226–70), who completed his *Life of St. Louis* in 1309, almost forty years after Louis's death, and dedicated the work to the king's great-grandson, prince Louis (who would become Louis x in 1315). 1309 is also three years after Philip IV (Louis IX's grandson and Louis x's father) expelled the Jews from France. Joinville says that Saint Louis warned of the dangers of debating with Jews.

He [St. Louis] told me [Joinville] that there was a great disputation of clergy and Jews in the monastery of Cluny, and there was a knight, to whom the abbot had given bread out of charity, and he requested that the abbot let him have the first word, and with some difficulty he got permission. Then the knight rose, and leaned upon his crutch, and asked them to bring forth the greatest cleric and greatest teacher among the Jews, and they did so. And he put a question to him as follows: "Master," said he, "I ask you whether you believe that the Virgin Mary, who carried God in her womb and in her arms, brought forth as a virgin, and that she is the Mother of God?" And the Jew replied that he did not believe a word of it. The knight replied that he was a great fool to trust himself inside her monastery and house, when he neither believed in nor loved her; "And truly you shall pay for it" he said. And thereupon he lifted up his staff, and struck the Jew behind the ear, and stretched him on the ground. And the Jews took to their heels, carrying their master off with them, all wounded. And that was the end of the disputation.

Then the abbot came to the knight, and said that he had acted very foolishly; and the knight replied that the abbot had acted still more foolishly, in calling such a disputation; for that there were numbers of Christians there, who by the close of the disputation would have gone away infidels, through not seeing through the fallacies of the Jews. "And so I tell you," said the King, "That no one ought to argue with them unless he be a very good scholar (*tres bon clerc*); but a layman, if he hear the Christian law defamed, should undertake its defense with the sword alone, and that he should use to run them straight through the belly as far in as it will go!"²⁶

A "tres bon clerc" may dispute with Jews, far from the ears of a lay audience. Louis's suggestion (according to Joinville) seems to be not that the abbot and monks of Cluny were not "tres bons clercs," but that their audience included lay people who might be led astray by listening to the Jews' arguments. Any

²⁶ Jean de Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, Jacques Monfrin ed. (Paris: Garnier, 1995), 26–28.

disputation with Jews must be done in very limited and controlled circumstances (Louis's handling of the Talmud trial of 1240 is a good example of this). And the only appropriate response of a layman to anti-Christian "blasphemies" is violence.

Louis x, Ordinance of 1315

We have seen that three years before Joinville completed his life of Saint Louis, the latter's grandson, Philip IV the Fair, expelled the Jews from France (in 1306). Nine years later, on July 28, 1315, Philip's son, Louis x, permitted the Jews to return to France and issued a lengthy ordinance establishing the conditions of their return.²⁷ The readmission was limited to a period of twelve years, and Jews were only allowed to live in cities where Jews had lived before the expulsion of 1306. The readmitted Jews could only work as craftsmen or merchants: lending money at interest was strictly forbidden (*nostre volonté n'est mie, que il puissent prester a usure, ainçois le deffendons expressement*), yet in the very next breath the king affirms that if the Jews *do* lend at interest, that the maximum rate should be two pence per pound per week. Further measures show that the king fully expected these Jews to lend money, as he reissues the standard prohibition against accepting Church vessels and vestments as pawn and specifies that all loans are to be made on the basis of pledges rather than documents. To explain the motivations for his reinstatement of Jews in France, the king mentions his desire to follow the example of his great-great-grandfather Saint Louis, who had allowed Jews to live in his realm, and the fact that the Church tolerates them in hopes of converting them one day to the true faith. It is clear in the ordinance that financial motivations also loomed large in his decision: the readmitted Jews are allowed to pursue the debts incurred before their expulsion; they will keep one third of the proceeds while the other two-thirds goes to the crown. As Jessica Elliot notes: "All debts owed to Jewish moneylenders had reverted to the crown with the expulsion of 1306, but legislation from 1310 and 1311 suggests that royal agents faced many difficulties in claiming these debts. The assistance of readmitted Jewish moneylenders would have made

²⁷ E. de Laurière, ed., *Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race. Premier volume, Contenant ce qu'on a trouvé d'ordonnances imprimées ou manuscrites, depuis Hugues Capet jusqu'à la fin du règne de Charles Le Bel* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1723), 595–97. For the Old French text, English translation, analysis, and bibliography, see Jessica Elliot "Louis X, Ordinance of 1315," <http://www.cn-telma.fr/relini/extrait271953/>.

it possible to collect many debts that had remained unclaimed after 1306.”²⁸ They are allowed to recover property (cemeteries, synagogues, houses), but only through purchase.

The ordinance also lists a number of fairly standard conditions regulating Jewish privileges and duties. They are required to wear badges. They may recover those books that had been seized by royal officers, with the exception of those that had been already sold and of the condemned Talmud. It is in this context that provision seventeen of the ordinance specifies: “They may not, under pain of committing a crime, dispute matters of faith with anyone, poor or rich, overtly or covertly” (*Il ne porront, sus paine de eux meffaire despunter de la foy a quelques personnes que ce soit, poure, ou riche, en apper, ou en secret*). Hence for Louis the prohibition against disputation is one of a number of standard measures to be imposed on the returning French Jews.

The examples we have examined in this article show that debate or disputation between Christians and non-Christians, particularly Jews, could be considered potentially harmful or dangerous. Our examples range from the third century to the fourteenth and include texts of civil and canon law, papal letters, theological treatises and hagiography. Granted, the dangers of disputation were less an object of preoccupation (and legislation) than other forms of Jewish-Christian encounter: commensality, sexual liaisons, and the non-respect of social hierarchies (Jews holding public office or having Christian servants). Such prohibition of disputation is often associated with the prohibition of blasphemy (since it was feared that, in arguing against Christians, Jews would blaspheme). But it is also associated (notably in the texts we have examined by Tertullian, Gregory IX, Thomas Aquinas, and Jean de Joinville) with the danger of weakening the faith of Christian disputants or their audience. Such disputes as did take place were to be carefully limited so as not to permit Jews to blaspheme and to insure that they would not weaken the faith of the Christians. This meant in particular preventing laymen and insufficiently prepared clergy from debating with Jews.

There is evidence, however, that more informal and open exchanges did take place. A number of apologetical texts, both Christian and Jewish, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries suggest that such debate was relatively common: the authors of these texts sought to give the faithful defensive arguments

28 John Tolan, “Sparring with the Pen: Religious Polemics and Apologetics between Jews, Christians and Muslims (13th to 15th Centuries),” in *Mediterraneum: Splendour of the Medieval Mediterranean, 13th–15th Centuries*, ed. Joan Alemany and Xavier Barral (Barcelona: Lunwerg, 2004).

to allow them to parry the attacks of their rivals.²⁹ We also have a number of Hebrew texts that reflect the realities of such debates and give their Jewish readers defense arguments to use against Christians.³⁰ A particularly interesting example is the 1286 *Disputatio contra iudeos* (Disputation against the Jews) attributed to the Genoese merchant Inghetto Contardo, describing a series of debates between Inghetto and prominent Jews of Mallorca in 1286.³¹ While such texts are never faithful transcripts of real arguments between opposing parties, they do seem to reflect real arguments between Jews and Christians—exactly the practices that the texts we have been looking at tried to prevent.

²⁹ Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture*, 190–221, 227–28.

³⁰ Hanne Trautner-Kromann, *Shield and Sword: Jewish Polemics against Christianity and the Christians in France and Spain from 100–1500* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993).

³¹ Inghetto Contardo and Gilbert Dahan, *Disputatio contra Iudeos = Controverse avec les juifs* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1993); Ora Limor, *Die Disputationen zu Ceuta (1179) und Mallorca (1286): zwei antijüdische Schriften aus dem mittelalterlichen Genua* (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1994).

The Brighter Side of Medieval Christian-Jewish Polemical Encounters: Transfer of Medical Knowledge in the Midi (Twelfth–Fourteenth Centuries)

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Abstract

This paper argues that as a result of the competition over patients between Jewish and Christian doctors in the Midi (twelfth–fourteenth centuries) Jewish doctors were more prone than other Jewish intellectuals to acquaint themselves with Christian culture (and also to convert). In this respect, the massive Latin-into-Hebrew cultural transfer in medicine contrasts with the slight Latin-into-Hebrew cultural transfer in philosophy (until the end of the fourteenth century). Jewish doctors were able to keep up with Latin medicine, even at times of rapid change, often through Latin-into-Hebrew translations.

To illustrate and sustain the general claims I look closely at a few figures: the anonymous Jewish doctor who called himself “Doeg the Edomite” and who, in the closing years of the twelfth century, translated into Hebrew twenty-four books of theoretical and practical medicine, mainly from the Salerno corpus; and Leon Joseph of Carcassonne, whose remarkable preface to his translation of Gerard de Solo’s *Pratica supernono Almansoris* (1394). I analyze in detail as an eyewitness report of a participant observer. His trajectory is comparable to that of Moses ben Samuel of Roquemaure (Jean, or Juan, of Avignon).

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Keywords

Doeg the Edomite – Leon Joseph of Carcassonne – Jean (Juan) of Avignon – medieval Jewish doctors – Jewish intellectual life in medieval Provence – cultural transfer – medieval Hebrew translations – competition over patients – religious polemics

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I do not think that there is in the whole domain of literature less profitable reading than that of controversies between Jews and Christians.

—SOLOMON SCHECHTER¹

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I Introduction

“Polemical encounters,” I must confess, are not at all my cup of tea. My preference definitively goes to congenial or at least courteous encounters. Therefore, when considering polemics, I choose to look at their “brighter side,” namely eventual collateral *positive* effects they may have had.² Happily, such effects can indeed be identified in the period and space I study, namely southern Europe in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Here I will attend to a type of polemical encounter that played a role in enriching medieval Jewish intellectual history. I will suggest that at several junctures the evolution of medieval Hebrew medicine was fostered by competition and adverse encounters between Jewish and Christian doctors. I will limit myself to the Midi, Provence in medieval Jewish parlance.

First, a few words on the place of medicine in the intellectual landscape of medieval Jews in Provence.³ As is well known, in ca. 1150, the secular sciences

¹ Solomon Schechter, *Studies on Judaism* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896), 126.

² This was the rationale that led to the organization of the conference “Religious Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge: The Brighter Side of Interreligious Debates in Medieval Europe,” Geneva, February 20–22, 2012. Papers presented at that conference were published in *Medieval Encounters* 22 (2016).

³ For what follows see: Joseph Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine, and Medieval Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Gad Freudenthal, “Arabic and Latin Cultures as Resources

began to be massively introduced and studied in Hebrew in Provence. Until the end of the fourteenth century, the study of profane disciplines was by and large grounded in Hebrew translations of Judeo-Arabic and Arabic texts. Only a few philosophical and scientific texts were translated from Latin, and oral intellectual exchanges between Jewish and gentile scholars were also scarce. Hebrew philosophy and science in Provence were a sort of island in the midst of an increasingly robust Latin culture. To avoid misunderstandings, let me add that the situation in the Italian peninsula was different and that in Provence, too, it began to change toward the end of the fourteenth century.

There was one intellectual domain in which interactions between Jews and Christians were relatively continuous from an early date: this is medicine. In the early thirteenth century and again in the fourteenth, Jewish physicians were abreast of Latin medicine, both through personal interactions and through Latin-into-Hebrew translations of medical works. The reason for this “medical exception,” as we might call it, is quite obvious: Patients, both Jewish and Christians, tended to seek the best possible medical treatment, thereby putting the Jewish doctors in constant and direct competition with the non-Jewish health care providers, despite the repeated interdictions against consulting a physician of another faith.⁴ Medieval Jewish physicians were under unceasing pressure from patients to acquire the best available knowledge, defined in terms of the prestige of certain books or medical schools in local lay opinion. At each specific place, therefore, medicine was a *unified knowledge system* in which Jewish doctors were compelled to keep up with the developments in medicine in the majority culture. This created a constant impulse to

for the Hebrew Translation Movement: Comparative Considerations, Both Quantitative and Qualitative,” in *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, ed. G. Freudenthal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 74–105; in the same volume, Carmen Caballero-Navas, “Medicine among Medieval Jews: The Science, the Art, and the Practice,” 320–42; Alexander Fidora et al., “Latin-into-Hebrew: Introducing a Neglected Chapter in European Cultural History,” in *Latin-into-Hebrew: Studies and Texts. Vol. 1, Studies*, ed. Resianne Fontaine and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 9–18.

⁴ On the interdictions see: Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine*, 90–99. The history of these repeated interdictions, which most of the time remained ineffective, is indicative of the intensity of the competition between doctors of the two faiths. In Judaism, only very few authorities expressed the view that an illness should be seen as resulting from divine providence and that seeking healing from a physician is prohibited. The overwhelming majority unequivocally ruled that a patient is obligated to seek healing and the physician is obligated to heal. See e.g. Fred Rosner, *Biomedical Ethics and Jewish Law* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing Co., 2001), 5–19; Gad Freudenthal, ed., “Introduction,” in *AIDS in Jewish Thought and Law* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing Co., 1998).

remain up-to-date. During most of the thirteenth century, Jewish physicians could rely on state-of-the-art Arabic medical works or their Hebrew translations. However, during periods of rapid change in Latin medicine (late twelfth century; second half of the fourteenth century) they were under pressure to appropriate the new doctrines of Latin medicine, especially when it became university-based. Thus the dynamics of knowledge transfer in medicine were propelled by continuous encounters—some friendly, some adverse—between Jewish and Christian doctors and were therefore independent of and different from the dynamics that characterized science and philosophy.

The Hebrew medical and pharmaceutical works themselves give very significant and tangible evidence of the constancy and intensity of contacts between Jewish physicians and the Christian majority culture. I refer to *le'azim*, that is, slightly vulgarized transcriptions of Latin medical terms, written in Hebrew characters, used in the Hebrew translations.⁵ *Le'azim*, whose forms vary slightly in accordance with the vernacular spoken in each region, were not (or at least not mainly) employed because no adequate Hebrew terms were available for the relevant medical and pharmaceutical notions. The reason was rather that the Jewish doctors—the intended users of these translations—communicated with their patients, colleagues, druggists, or pharmacists, both Jewish and gentile, in the local Romance vernacular. Specifically, Jews were only rarely pharmacists, so that the Jewish doctors and patients perforce had to buy the prescribed medicines from non-Jews with whom they could communicate only in the vernacular.⁶ Also, in some places Jews had to pass examinations in order to be licensed, and these were conducted in the vernacular. The Jewish student of medicine and the doctor thus had to be able to express in the vernacular information they had acquired from Hebrew medical works, whence the need for the translations to acquaint their readers with the *le'azim* in use in their time and place. This is also the reason why Romance *le'azim*

5 In recent years, some attention has been given to this socio-linguistic phenomenon, albeit mostly from a philological point of view. See Gerrit Bos, *Novel Medical and General Hebrew Terminology from the 13th Century*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 2013); Gerrit Bos and Guido Mensching, “Arabic-Romance Medico-Botanical Glossaries in Hebrew Manuscripts from the Iberian Peninsula and Italy,” *Aleph* 15 (2015): 6–61, and the literature cited there at n. 4. For the linguistic nature of *le'azim* see Cyrill Aslanov, “Latin in Hebrew Letters: The Transliteration/Transcription/Translation of a Compendium of Arnaldus de Villa Nova's *Speculum medicinae*” and “From Latin into Hebrew through the Romance Vernaculars: The Creation of an Interlanguage Written in Hebrew Characters,” in *Latin-into-Hebrew: Studies and Texts. Vol. 1, Studies*, ed. Resianne Fontaine and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 45–58; 69–84, respectively.

6 Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine*, 88.

appear in translations from both Arabic and Latin and why in the process of transmission of these texts the scribes or copyists often replaced the original *le'azim* with those of their own vernacular. Unlike in the medical texts, *le'azim* are rare in scientific and philosophical literature, undoubtedly because Jewish scholars worked in a closed community and only rarely conversed with their gentile counterparts.⁷ The omnipresence of *le'azim* in the medical literature thus gives tangible evidence of the ongoing communication between Jewish doctors and their non-Jewish medical milieus. Archival documents from the fourteenth century also provide rich information about the collaboration of Jewish and Christian doctors.⁸

As a result of their contact with the gentile society, Jewish doctors were acquainted with Christian culture more than most other Jewish intellectuals. Their special vantage point allowed them to compare their own culture critically with that of the majority and possibly perceive the latter's positive sides, not the least of which was the ever more advanced world of learning. Obviously, they must also have been aware that being baptized held the promise of economic and social upward mobility. This is what made Jewish doctors into a social group particularly prone to conversion. Statistical data collected by Richard W. Emery for Perpignan in the fourteenth and early fifteenth century has clearly established that, after other factors are discounted (especially pressure by authorities), "within the élite groups, it does seem evident that physicians tended more toward conversion, and less to exile, than the others."⁹ Therefore, when we look at inter-religious encounters in medieval Provence, Jewish physicians deserve particular attention as a distinct social group.

⁷ An interesting exception to this rule is Gershon ben Shlomo's small encyclopedia, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* (The Gate of Heaven), composed toward the end of the thirteenth century. See Lothar Kopf, "The *Le'azim* in the *Shaar haShamayim* of Gershon ben Shlomo" [in Hebrew], pts. 1 and 2, *Tarbitz* 24 (1955): 150–66, 274–89, 410–25, and *Tarbitz* 25 (1956): 36–43, reprinted in *Studies in Arabic and Hebrew Lexicography*, ed. M.H. Goshen-Gottstein (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1976), Hebrew section, 139–95. Why Gershon used so many *le'azim* is an open question.

⁸ Monica H. Green and Daniel Lord Smail, "The Trial of Floreta d'Ays (1403): Jews, Christians, and Obstetrics in Later Medieval Marseille," *Journal of Medieval History* 34 (2008): 185–211; Noël Coulet, "Frontières incertaines: Les juifs de Provence au Moyen Âge," *Provence Historique* 35 (1985): 371–76, on 374; Juliette Sibon, *Les Juifs de Marseille au XIVe siècle* (Paris: Le Cerf, 2011).

⁹ Richard W. Emery, "Jewish Physicians in Medieval Perpignan," *Michael* 12 (1991): 113–34, on 121. Emery connects this observation with the fact that "[b]y the end of the fourteenth century, Jewish writers were playing a new role—rather than transmitting advanced eastern knowledge to the West, they were translating western works into Hebrew;" but he does not spell out this connection as he sees it.

In this paper, I approach this theme on a qualitative level: I will *illustrate* the above claims concerning the connectedness between Jewish doctors and the majority culture by considering a few particular cases that I take to be exemplary. These are: the late-twelfth-century converted doctor who referred to himself as “Doeg the Edomite” and whom I have dubbed “the father of Latin-into-Hebrew translations”; and three fourteenth-century doctors who were active as Latin-into-Hebrew translators, notably Leon Joseph of Carcassonne. We know much more about the latter and it will be helpful to begin with him, proceeding in reverse chronological order.

II Case Studies (1): Three Late-Fourteenth-Century Latin-into-Hebrew Translators of Medical Works

I begin, then, with the relatively well-known Leon Joseph of Carcassonne, whose claim to fame is the preface he added to his 1394 Hebrew translation of Gerard de Solo's *Pratica super nono Almansoris*. Leon Joseph was born around 1365 and in 1390 he was already *magister*. He was versed in, and impressed by, Latin medicine and was one of the very first Jews who studied it in the University of Montpellier. In 1394, King Charles VI expelled all Jews from France and Leon Joseph found refuge in Perpignan, his birthplace, which belonged at that time to the Crown of Aragon. He was an affluent man who also played an important role in Jewish communal affairs. He died shortly before 1418.¹⁰

Leon Joseph's fascinating, very personal preface comes down to us in three out of the thirteen manuscripts of his translation. In the Appendix, I publish a full English translation, based on Haviva Yishai's and my recent critical edition of the Hebrew text. What makes this text so significant is that Leon Joseph, as a participant observer, offers us highly perceptive comparative observations on the study of medicine—and of profane science in general—in the Jewish and Christian cultural systems. He also affords valuable insights into the relationships between Jewish and Christian doctors at his time. I will review some of the topics that his preface brings to the fore.¹¹

¹⁰ Ernest Renan [and Adolf Neubauer], *Les écrivains juifs français du quatorzième siècle*, Vol. 31 of *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1893), 770–78; Richard W. Emery, “Documents Concerning Some Jewish Scholars in Perpignan in the Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries,” *Michael* 4 (1976): 27–48, on 40–43; Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine*, 30–31.

¹¹ Leon Joseph's Hebrew translation of *Pratica super nono Almansoris* itself will not be considered here. It was analyzed in considerable detail by Moritz Steinschneider in

Leon Joseph begins by lamenting the low level of instruction of the Jews in the sciences, notably in medicine. This is what led him to study with Christians. He then continues (§ 12):¹²

When I recognized that the above-mentioned sciences are known among the Christians and their study is impressive and wondrous I said to myself: let me learn a little of their language and sit in their universities [*yeshivotehem*] and their studia [*beit 'iyyunam*] and follow in their footsteps, so that I may benefit myself and others by grasping their statements and some of the truth of their books.

Leon Joseph realized his goal and studied medicine at the University of Montpellier; he was one of the very first Jews to be able to do so.¹³ One can easily imagine the social and even psychological barriers a young Jew had to overcome in order to study Latin—the religious language of “the uncircumcised,” as it was called in Jewish discourse—but unfortunately Leon Joseph does not say anything specific about this, not even about how and with whom he studied Latin. In general, however, he makes clear that he perceived his non-Jewish environment as hostile (“I lived among them [the Christians] for a long time and was ill regarded. No one of our nation is respectable in their eyes unless he is a physician who cures them of their illnesses”—§16, see below). Of Jean de Tournemire, the chancellor, whom he describes as the only Christian to have treated him kindly, he speaks with exceptional warmth, corroborating that in general the atmosphere was inimical (more on Tournemire below). Unfortunately lack of relevant evidence does not allow us to say more about this intriguing question.

Having become familiar with the scholastic university and the science taught and studied there, Leon Joseph now had a privileged vantage point from which to observe Jewish society. He identified various reasons for the clear Christian superiority in science and medicine. One of them had to do with the fact that

¹² Verkäufliche Handschriften. 13: *Commentar über das Buch [an] Almansor von Gerard [Geraut] de Sol*, “Hebräische Bibliographie 8 (1865): 47–48, 89–94, and *Die hebraeischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin, 1893; hereafter “HÜ”), § 496b, 794–97, 1019–22 (endnote 61).

¹³ The paragraph numbers refer to the English translation in the Appendix, which in turn reproduces that of the critical edition. The quotations often include omissions, which I did not indicate so as make the reading fluent.

¹⁴ Joseph Shatzmiller, “Étudiants juifs à la faculté de médecine de Montpellier, dernier quart du XIV^e siècle,” *Jewish History* 6 (1992): 243–55.

the rank-and-file Jews believed that profane sciences were incompatible with Jewish tradition (§5). In Jewish society, Leon Joseph goes on to explain, the Rationalists (i.e. students of science and philosophy) were under constant surveillance and pressure from the Traditionalists. Consequently, and this is one of his main points, no public teaching of science could be instituted. Leon Joseph writes (§ 6):

Even those few who inquired into [the sciences] were forced to do this in secret and hidden away. They were not allowed to teach the rationalist science [*ha-hokmah*] in the marketplaces and in the public squares, nor to discuss it or establish in public an academy.

Leon Joseph here refers to the *absence of institutionalization* of the teaching of science among Jews as a cause for the Jewish scientific backwardness. A modern sociologist of science cannot but applaud the insightfulness of this observation. The absence of permanent structures in which science is transmitted from master to student, where scientific thought is cumulative from one generation to the next, and where beginners are trained in the scientific method by elders, is a *sine qua non* for the advancement of science.¹⁴ In the late fourteenth century, the university, as an academic institution, already had proven its mettle.

But there is even more to it. Leon Joseph discerningly notes that the social structure of science also has an impact on its very method. Specifically, the institutionalization of science instruction in the medieval Faculty of Arts was intrinsically bound up with the practice of the Scholastic method, which Leon Joseph views as a most efficient tool in furthering knowledge. He writes of the Christian scholars (§ 13):

They cunningly argue [*mitpalpelim*] over the truth [of theories], even by positing falsehoods. In their disputations, they are painstakingly rigorous in their questions and answers, so as to extract the truth from the center of its contrary by examining both sides [*lit. contraries*] of everything, 'like a lily among thorns' (Song of Songs 2:2).

¹⁴ See e.g., Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*, edited and with an introduction by Norman W. Storer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Joseph Ben-David, *The Scientist's Role in Society*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Ben-David, *Scientific Growth: Essays on the Social Organization and Ethos of Science*, ed. and introd. Gad Freudenthal (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991).

Leon Joseph clearly refers to the use of *quaestio disputata* that developed during the second half of the thirteenth century.¹⁵ A topic was presented in the form of a *quaestio* (*utrum ...*), for which the master or someone else then presented arguments both for and against a given solution. A detailed scrutiny of the arguments followed and the disputation was concluded with a *determinatio*. On some occasions, questions were debated publicly. The *quaestio* was at the very heart of the Scholastic method, at once a method of inquiry and of teaching, and it played an important role in the advancement of knowledge as it was then understood. It is this method and its efficiency that Leon Joseph imaginatively describes with the words “cunningly argue over the truth [of theories], even by posing falsehoods, so as to extract the truth from the center of its contrary by examining two contraries of everything.”

Leon Joseph now adduces an effective rhetorical argument to legitimize his undertaking vis-à-vis the opponents of scientific and philosophical study: he argues that the rabbis of the Talmud had already employed precisely this method of “positing the contrary” (§14), so that it is particularly deplorable that at present Jews do not use it. Leon Joseph, we see, admires both the mode of institutionalization of science practiced by the Christians and the resulting contents. This is what had brought him to the university in the first place. He writes (§ 20): “I [thus] followed in the footsteps of the learned Christians and they directed me to the right path, showed me the ways, and revealed to me the books, both new and old.” We learn in passing that Christian doctors often challenged Jewish physicians in disputations, precisely the method they—but not the Jews—studied and practiced at the university. Leon Joseph thus writes that his Hebrew translations of Gerard’s works will enable the Jewish doctor (§ 23)

to stand firm like a fortified pillar, fearing nothing, not even the myriads of the community of [Christian] physicians, were they to confront him with experiences¹⁶ and disputations.

¹⁵ See Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

¹⁶ The term “experiences” (נִסְעָנוֹת) is here used in a technical sense: it denotes the purportedly empirical observations accumulated by a doctor. It specifically refers to such “experience” that could not be inferred from theoretical principles. See on this notion: Y. Tzvi Langermann, “On Tajriba/Nissayon (“Experience”): Texts in Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, and Arabic,” *Aleph* 14 (2014): 147–76.

An anonymous fourteenth-century doctor confirms this perception of the situation:

We, Israelite physicians, who are in the exilic captivity, need to be particularly proficient in [medical] science. For the gentile physicians are envious of us and against our will they provoke us, and at times we are compelled to explain our knowledge in front of them. And if they hear us [admit] ignorance they say: this one causes the death of Gentiles. Therefore, I advise any Jew not to touch [i.e. treat medically] a Gentile unless he is capable to answer them [the gentile physicians] on the topics in natural science that one should know.¹⁷

Leon Joseph therefore reckons that in the future, the users of his translations will bless him inasmuch as (§ 26)

I have been the cause of their livelihood and their ability to hold their ground when confronted by the Christian physicians [who challenge them] with experience and disputations.

Here, we see in a concrete way what “polemical encounters” were like between Jewish and gentile physicians in late-fourteenth-century Provence. They were Janus faced: on the one hand, these encounters were fuelled by competition over patients and obviously polemical and even hostile; on the other hand, the constant polemical pressure brought about intellectual emulation, which resulted in Latin-into-Hebrew knowledge transfer.

Understandably, the Christian doctors did not welcome any “knowledge leakage” to Jews and forbade the selling of medical books to non-Christians.¹⁸ It took Leon Joseph no less than ten years until he found someone who was willing to sell him two medical works he desired, and then he was made to pay double their value (§ 22).

Leon Joseph makes a few further interesting observations on social relations. One of them is that in general, Christians despise Jews, except if they are good physicians. He writes (§ 16):

I lived among them [the Christians] for a long time and was ill regarded. For no one of our nation is respectable in their eyes unless he is a

¹⁷ Quoted from: A. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1886), coll. 733-4 (ms Oppenheim 180, Catalogue No. 2134).

¹⁸ See Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine*, 31 and 159, n. 78.

physician who cures them of their illnesses. [Such a physician,] however, sits at the table of kings and is admitted to their presence.

In this generally unfriendly or even hostile Christian environment, Leon Joseph was particularly sensitive to signs of a more cordial attitude toward him. He has very warm words for Jean de Tournemire (ca. 1330–90/96), who in the 1370s was physician to the popes in Avignon and from 1384 was chancellor of the University of Montpellier. He writes (§ 25):

In his days he was the head [i.e. chancellor] of all the scholars of Montpellier. I saw him with my own eyes and talked with him. In his conversation he was righteous, his manner was not like that of the scholars of his generation, namely to humiliate the Jews who practice the art of medicine.

It seems plausible that Tournemire smoothed Leon Joseph's entry to the university.¹⁹ On this supposition, Leon Joseph would have studied in Montpellier between 1384 and 1394. It seems that in the 1390s increasing numbers of Jewish students knocked at the university's gates, since a proposal to forbid all teaching of medicine to non-Christians was introduced.²⁰ It was obviously motivated by the same considerations as those that led to the prohibition of the sale of medical books to non-Christians.

Leon Joseph concludes his paragraph on Tournemire with the words "May his soul be bound in the bundle of life of the righteous of the world's nations (תְהִיה נֶפֶשׁ צָרוּה בְצִדְקַת חֲסִידֵי הָעוֹמֹת)." Such a blessing for the soul of a gentile, even a righteous one, is exceedingly rare. It bespeaks Leon Joseph's deep gratefulness toward Jean de Tournemire, who stooped to talk gently to a young Jew seeking to acquire the best available education as he prepared to become a doctor. More generally, it reflects a non-confrontational attitude toward Christian society and it illustrates the general tendency of Jewish doctors toward rapprochement with Christian society and individuals.

¹⁹ Shatzmiller, "Étudiants juifs," 248. Shatzmiller also conjectures that Tournemire's attitude toward the Jewish students was not as disinterested as it appeared to Leon Joseph but was motivated by the beginning of the decline of the university and the need to attract students (*Jews, Medicine*, 31). On Tournemire see Ernest Wickersheimer, *Dictionnaire biographique des médecins en France au moyen âge*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1979), 2: 494–95; Danielle Jacquot, *Supplément [to] Dictionnaire biographique des médecins en France au moyen âge* (Geneva: Droz, 1979), 188.

²⁰ Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine*, 29–30.

Leon Joseph is keenly aware of the issue of *le'azim* and underscores their role and significance. He writes (§ 30):

I will now write down all the compound medicines in Latin [in fact: vernacularized Latin words], after having first translated them [*ha'atiqi otam*] into our tongue, so as to be helpful to the neophytes in this art: they will be able to view themselves as learned and wise, accomplished veterans in the art. The apothecaries will not denigrate them, and they will not have to consult pharmacopeias if they know the names of the medicines by heart.

Leon Joseph clearly refers to the fact that to communicate well with the pharmacists—as any doctor does on a daily basis—the Jewish doctor needs to know the names of the medicines in the language understood also by the non-Jewish health professionals. (Recall that as a rule the pharmacists were non-Jews.)

A last point concerns the religious aspects of these medical Jewish-Christian encounters. In his own Introduction to *Pratica super nono Almansoris*, the author, Gerard de Solo, extols the importance of the triad, a notion, he thinks, whose significance has been established in science and philosophy. He ascribes to Aristotle the thesis that the number of perfections is three and goes on to bring this idea to bear on the notion of the Trinity. Gerard writes:²¹

God is referred to as a “High Place” [מָקוֹם גָּבוֹהַ],²² because three features characterizing the place also characterize God. [...] Therefore, in Book I of the *Physics* [Chapter 7], the Philosopher stated that any perfection is *threefold*, namely: perfection in substance; perfection in potentiality; and perfection in actuality. The first perfection, in substance, relates to the *Father*; and the second perfection relates to the *Son*; and the third perfection relates to the *Holy Spirit*. This number, namely three, we are used to evoking it and we make it into the foundation of our prayers and our other spiritual matters, so that we have made it into something divine [תְּהִלָּה, translating *in divinis*] for us.

²¹ I translate Leon Joseph of Carcassonne's Hebrew understanding of Gerard de Solo, author's Introduction to *Pratica super nono Almansoris* according to: Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, MS Or. 75, fol. 5a; Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College MS 918, fols. 1b–2a; Moscow, Russian National Library, MS 1124, fol. 6b. The Latin original is in *Pratica super nono Almansoris* [bound together with *Introductiorum juvenum; tractatus de gradibus; libellus de febribus ejusdem*] (Lyon, 1504), “Proemium,” 2.

²² Possibly referring to 1 Kings 8:30.

This religiously sensitive passage and some similar ones confronted Leon Joseph with a dilemma: Should he translate them or skip them? Might such passages not offend and keep away his Jewish readers? In his preface, Leon Joseph confronted the issue head-on and his choice again reveals him as a truly broad-minded scholar (§ 29):

Now you, the community of physicians, my brethren! When you read the author's introduction you will see that he is praying to his king and his God, affirming the unity, trinity and duplicity—[all this] I translated word for word! Do not speak ill of me, do not rail against me. For my intention is pleasing, [namely] that the book reach you without any omission or deficiency occurring in it, so that you may grasp it in its entirety. But if you do not wish to read the introduction, you can start reading at the beginning of the book itself. [For my part,] however, I did not wish to omit anything that is in it; rather, I wished to add upon it.

In the preface to his translation of De Solo's *Introductorium juvenum, sive regimine corporis humni* (מישיר המתהילים, dated 1402), Leon Joseph similarly writes:

I have decided to translate [this work] word-for-word, so that not even a single word be missing, from beginning to end. Perhaps some haughty man will complain about [the fact that] I have translated the totality of the author's words and have not modified his text when he gives grace to his God. But in all the books that I translated, my practice was to translate word-for-word, from the first word to the last, my intention being that there be no deficiency in them.²³

There are a few things to be learnt from these two passages. For one thing and very trivially, Latin-into-Hebrew translations of medical works were not simple vehicles for the transmission of neutral medical knowledge and practical know-how between the two cultures. Latin medical texts are only seemingly indifferent to religious considerations; in truth they may function as vehicles for conveying Christian religious lore into Jewish culture.²⁴ Second, the translators

²³ Renan and Neubauer, *Les écrivains juifs*, 776.

²⁴ This topic is discussed in detail in Naama Cohen-Hanegbi, "Transmitting Medicine Across Religions: Jean of Avignon's Hebrew Translation of *Lilium medicine*," and, with Uri Melammed, "Appendix: Jean of Avignon's Introduction to His Translation of *Lilium medicine*, an Annotated Critical Edition and Translation," both in *Latin-into-Hebrew: Studies and Texts. Vol. 1, Studies*, ed. Resianne Fontaine and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill,

themselves were the first who came to grips with this alien religious material, which they usually encountered as a result of their exchanges with Christian colleagues. One can imagine that these exchanges lessened their resentment toward Christianity and at least implicitly posed the question of conversion. Leon Joseph self-consciously chose not to function as a “filter” that would keep certain content out of the Hebrew literary corpus, and I think that it is appropriate to characterize his attitude as “open-minded,” as decidedly rejecting the zealous attitude that he identified, and criticized, in some of his brethren. It will thus not come as a surprise to learn that a few years after having done these two translations and written his two Prefaces, Leon Joseph ended up getting baptized, adopting the name “Leonardus Benedictus.”²⁵ Clearly, his conversion is intimately linked to the web of his interactions with Christian culture: his studies at the university, his medical practice, and the role as a go-between for Christian and Jewish cultures.

How did Jewish readers react to Leon Joseph’s “permissive” attitude and to the reference to the Trinity in a Hebrew medical book? A complete answer cannot be given, of course. But one manuscript of the text is rather telling. A past owner of what is now Rome, National Library, MS Or. 75, simply covered with thick black ink all the words smacking of Christianity and replaced them with unassailable Jewish locutions (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.2). For example, where Leon Joseph’s Hebrew translation of Gerard had the phrase “every perfection is to be found in three,” our defender of Judaism replaced “three” by “Blessed-be-He”; the reference to the Father as the first perfection was replaced by the zealous doctor with “the Creator blessed-be-He.”

Leon Joseph’s intellectual profile and his life history are not unique. They bear strong resemblance to those of contemporaries who also became Latin-into-Hebrew translators. One of them is Moses ben Samuel of Roquemaure, near Perpignan, who was the object of a detailed study by Naama Cohen-Hanegbi, which I will summarize in a few words.²⁶ Moses was born around 1320 and in 1353 he moved to Seville, where he was to remain for the next three decades. In 1360 he translated a popular Latin medical work, the *Lilium medicine* by Bernard of Gordon, a prestigious professor of medicine at the University of Montpellier a few decades earlier. Moses ben Samuel was baptized at an

2013), 121–45 and 146–59, respectively. Similarly: Katelyn Mesler, “The Medieval Lapidary of Techel/Azareus on Engraved Stones and Its Jewish Appropriations,” *Aleph* 14 (2014): 75–143.

25 Emery, “Documents Concerning,” 40–41; Emery, “Jewish Physicians,” 119. The conversion took place after 1414, i.e. three or four years before Leon Joseph’s death.

26 Cohen-Hanegbi, “Transmitting Medicine.”

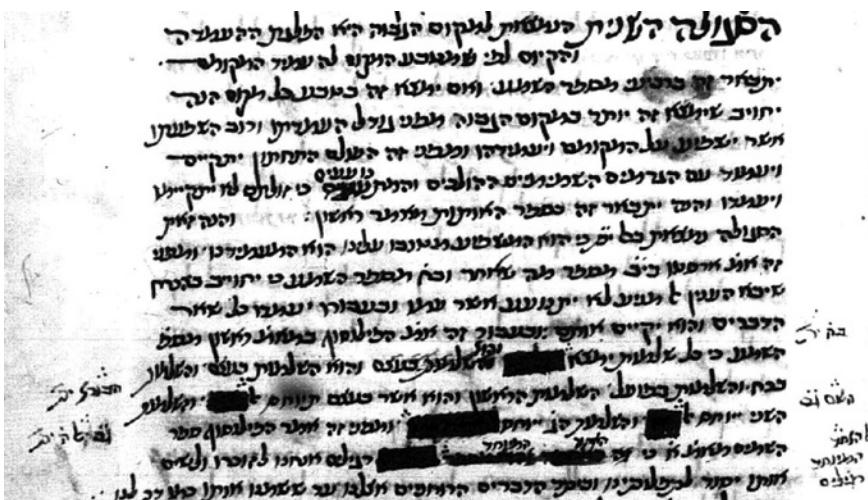


FIGURE 2.1 *Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, ms Or. 75, fol. 5a.*
Allusions to Christian notions are covered with black ink and replaced by Jewish ones in the margins.

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CENTRALE DI ROMA.

FIGURE 2.2
Moscow, Russian National Library, ms 1124, fol. 6a–b. The same text as in Figure 1, but with the entire text legible.

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unknown date and was thereafter called “Jean (or Juan) of Avignon.” The bulk of his translation seems to have been done when he still lived as a Jew. Like Leon Joseph, Moses ben Samuel wrote a “translator’s preface” that explains his decision to translate this particular work. But contrary to Leon Joseph’s limpid Preface, it is written in fairly enigmatic rhymed prose and its precise meaning and purpose to a large extent elude the reader. Moses presents his decision to translate the *Lilium medicine* as having been triggered by a sort of revelation in

a daydream and thus as deriving from some supernal wisdom. We recall that Leon Joseph evoked only pragmatic social considerations to explain the usefulness of his Latin-into-Hebrew translations. (His brief allusion to an internal “voice speaking” [§ 5] is metaphorical.)

Like Leon Joseph half a century later, Moses ben Samuel had to cope with the presence of religiously sensitive material in the translated text. When facing it, he deployed a number of distinct methods, which together evince an “open” attitude toward Christianity. “For him,” Cohen-Hanegbi comments, “the border between Judaism and Christianity was no longer firm and impenetrable.”²⁷ Moses’s rapprochement with Christianity, which was to lead to his conversion, was again a direct consequence of the intensive social interactions between Jewish and Christian physicians.

A third and last example is Abraham Abigdor (1351–after 1399), about whom we unfortunately know little.²⁸ He was a precocious *illuy*, for at the age of seventeen he had already written (1367) a first book of his own, *segullat melakhim* (Royal Excellence), which expounds on some topics in logic and other disciplines in rhymed prose.²⁹ Like Leon Joseph, he translated De Solo’s *Pratica super nono Almansoris*,³⁰ to which he added an all-too-brief preface.³¹ From it we learn that (again like Leon Joseph a few years later) he had a low opinion of his fellow Jews and decided to “go up to the mountain,” i.e. to Montpellier (referred to as “the mountain,” רַהַן, in Hebrew), where he studied at the university between 1367 and 1381. The acquaintance with Latin logic, which Abraham acquired at the university, is evident in his super-commentary on Averroes’s

²⁷ Cohen-Hanegbi, “Transmitting Medicine,” 141.

²⁸ Renan and Neubauer, *Les écrivains juifs*, 717–22; Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 74–76, 325–26, 471–72, 777, 780, 794, 1019–22; Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine*, 29–30; Luis García Ballester and Eduard Feliu, “Las relaciones intelectuales entre médicos judíos y cristianos. La traducción hebrea de las *Medicationis Parabole* de Arnau de Vilanova, por Abraham Abigdor (ca. 1384),” *Asclepio* 45 (1993): 55–88.

²⁹ Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 325. Edition by Raphael Cohen (Jerusalem: R. Cohen, 2009).

³⁰ Steinschneider conjectured that Leon Joseph’s translation contains evidence of an acquaintance with that of Abraham Abigdor; see his “Verkäufliche Handschriften,” 93; *HÜ*, 796.

³¹ The Preface to his translation of Bernard Alberti’s *Introductorium in practicam pro projectis* was published by Steinschneider in “Medizinische Schriften im Besitz des Herrn Halberstam,” *Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* 10 (1883): 101–12, 157–69, on 165; it was reproduced unaltered in García Ballester, Ferré, and Feliu, “Jewish Appreciation,” appendix E, 117.

Isagoge.³² Abraham did not specialize in medical translations: his eight Latin-into-Hebrew translations also include works on logic. Abraham Abigdor's son, Salomon Abigdor (b. 1378) followed in the footsteps of his father: he socialized with Christian astronomers and translated into Hebrew a Latin work of astronomy (1399).³³ Contrary to the two other translators considered above, Abraham Abigdor did not convert.

III Case Studies (2): Doeg the Edomite—the Late-Twelfth-Century Latin-into-Hebrew Translator of Medical Works

I now move two centuries back to take a very brief look at a doctor who, on the threshold of the thirteenth century, completed no fewer than twenty-four Latin-into-Hebrew translations of medical works, both theoretical and practical. Steinschneider discovered the existence of this early translator in 1866, but he remained all but forgotten until very recently.³⁴ All we know about this anonymous prolific translator derives from the introduction to his collection of medical translations, dated 1197–99, and from a few poems he prefixed to some of his translations. We learn that he was a convert, who at some point came to repent his conversion and feel he was a traitor. He was living as a Christian and had a high social position but came to believe that his success rested on falsehoods and treason. He refers to himself as “Doeg the Edomite,” a pseudonym that expresses his negative self-image as someone who betrayed his people.³⁵

Doeg translated into Hebrew the most important works of contemporary Latin medicine. The context is this: beginning in the early twelfth century, Latin medicine increasingly introduced the so-called Salerno corpus, which included translations of works by Hippocrates, Galen, and a number of Arabic physicians. This was the beginning of learned medicine in Europe and the first step toward the institutionalization of its study in the university. In Doeg's time, virtually no learned medical texts were available in Hebrew. Provence

³² Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 75.

³³ Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 643–44.

³⁴ See Gad Freudenthal, “The Father of the Latin-into-Hebrew Translations: ‘Doeg the Edomite,’ the Twelfth-Century Repentant Convert,” in Fontaine and Freudenthal, *Latin-into-Hebrew*, 105–20, on which I also draw in what follows. See also Freudenthal and Resianne Fontaine, “Philosophy and Medicine in Jewish Provence, Anno 1199: Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Doeg the Edomite Translating Galen’s *Tegni*,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 26 (2016): 1–26.

³⁵ See 1 Sam. 21:8, 22:9, 18; Ps. 52. In the talmudic tradition, Doeg and Ahitophel are presented as the archetypical villains; see Genesis Rabbah 32:7; J Pe’ah 16a.

already harbored a sizable group of Arabophone Jewish physicians who hailed from al-Andalus and who used Arabic medical works, but the native Jewish doctors knew neither Latin nor Arabic and could not access the learned Greco-Arabic medicine. We learn from Doeg that the high prestige of the new, bookish medicine prompted Jewish patients to shift their confidence to gentle practitioners. As a result, he says, Jews were taking medications that were impure according to Jewish dietary Law. Doeg decided that he would help his Jewish colleagues to regain the trust of their patients. This is what motivated him to translate twenty-four books of theoretical and practical medicine, of which some seventeen are extant. On account of his gigantic translation project, Doeg deserves the epithet “The father of Latin-into-Hebrew translations.”

The analogues with the situation in the late fourteenth century are unmistakable. In both periods, a competitive context between Christian and Jewish doctors, in conjunction with an awareness of the superiority of Latin medicine, triggered Latin-into-Hebrew translations. In both cases, too, polemical encounters among physicians induced knowledge transfer.

Doeg was baptized, apparently by his own free will. Which happened first? Did he first convert and thereupon learn Latin and study medicine? Or was it the other way around, as in the cases of our two fourteenth-century translators? There are good reasons to think that he began his translation project as a Jew but was already a (repenting) Christian when he brought it to completion. Thus, we witness here again a causal relationship between the medical profession, the study of Latin, and conversion.

Doeg was aware that his translations would introduce Hebrew culture in Provence to a new kind of knowledge: profane science, devoid of religious relevance and legitimization. In his preface, Doeg makes some apologetic statements that underscore the educational value of the translated works, insisting that studying the science (or art) of medicine is religiously permissible. But, as it so often happened, the new, “alien” body of knowledge was immediately met by fierce opposition. Doeg recounts an episode that presumably took place before his conversion, in which he was harshly criticized with the following argument:

Did you not hear what our Rabbis said elsewhere, namely: “He who wishes to examine the science of medicine should study it [at] a time that is neither day nor night, for it is said, ‘Thou shalt study it [the Torah] day and night [Josh. 1:8].’”³⁶

³⁶ Quoted from Freudenthal, “The Father of the Latin-into-Hebrew Translations,” 115, where the original context of this quotation is explained.

Doeg, who obviously had the Talmud at his fingertips, retorted with a nice *pil-pul* that need not concern us here. But it is important to note that we have here an early instance of what Leon Joseph was to point out much later: that Jewish Rationalists were under constant and unrelenting pressure by Traditionalists. Already before the end of the twelfth century, we see, the very introduction of secular learning, even medical, into Jewish culture was opposed. This opposition had flared up before Maimonides's writings reached Provence and was thus independent of any specific theological content around which the later Maimonidean controversies would revolve: what was opposed was the very study of any kind of knowledge other than the authoritative Jewish corpus.

Doeg, we see, shared with his fourteenth-century successors a number of traits. Like them, he became involved in Latin-into-Hebrew translations as a result of the rivalry and competition between Jewish and gentile physicians. He certainly studied under Christian masters, possibly at the University of Montpellier, although we have no details about this. And again like his later counterparts, he became Christian. Doeg thus highlights once more that Jewish physicians who were in close contact with Christian society were particularly prone to convert.

IV Conclusion

In periods in which Latin medicine changed rapidly—namely, in the early thirteenth century, with the entry of the Salerno corpus, and in the fourteenth century, with the appearance of the “new Galen”—we see the following common pattern. A Jewish physician in the Midi, possibly already licensed as a *magister*, would have regular encounters with his Christian counterparts—whether competitive and polemical, as described by Doeg the Edomite and Leon Joseph, or collaborative and friendly, as known from other sources. Through these regular contacts he would become aware of changes in Latin medicine, of the existence of new ideas and techniques that were not available in Hebrew. (This was particularly the case in the fourteenth century, when Christian doctors already employed the Scholastic method of disputation.) This awareness of the inferiority of Jewish medicine, exacerbated by the competition over patients, would motivate him to learn Latin so as to be able to access the innovative Latin medical works and hold his ground in debates. In some cases, he would even study at the university. Thereafter, if he felt a calling to educate his Jewish colleagues, he would translate one or more prestigious medical works from Latin into Hebrew. Concomitantly, his familiarity with Christian culture would increase, and the taboo surrounding it would begin to

crumble. From there, the road to conversion was slippery and short, although certainly not inexorable.

It is good to remember that the Latin-into-Hebrew translators were often involved in polemics not on one, but on two fronts. Together with all Jewish physicians, they had to confront the animosity and competition of Christian physicians, who challenged them “with experiences and disputations.” But they also had to deal with antagonism from within their own community, namely the disapproving attitude of traditionalist circles, who resented any study other than that of the Torah. (To be sure, the various bans on the study of philosophy excluded medical works, but the study of these works presupposed the study of logic and natural science, which were prohibited.) Doeg the Edomite and Leon Joseph, we saw, both gave lucid accounts of the traditionalist censure of the study of science and recognized its deleterious effect on Jewish thought. The expurgated words in the Rome manuscript of Leon Joseph’s translation show that the informal censorship and surveillance bore the desired fruits.

Doctors whose only cultural language was Hebrew would for many years draw on the Hebrew translations of the Latin medical works. In all likelihood, Leon Joseph’s prediction—and hope—came true: those who “will come after me,” he wrote (§ 26),

will bless me on account of the [translations] and will remember me in their hearts, inasmuch as I will be the cause of their subsistence and their ability to hold their ground in the face of the Christian physicians [who challenge them] with experience and disputations.

Appendix

Leon Joseph of Carcassonne: Translator’s Preface to the Hebrew Translation of Gerard de Solo’s Pratica super nono Almansoris (ca. 1394)

Prefatory Note

Leon Joseph of Carcassonne’s Preface to the Hebrew translation of Gerard de Solo’s *Pratica super nono Almansoris* has been published twice: E. Renan [and A. Neubauer], *Les écrivains juifs français du quatorzième siècle*, vol. 31 of *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1893), 771–75; Luis García Ballester, Lola Ferré, and Eduard Feliu, “Jewish Appreciation of Fourteenth-Century Scholastic Medicine,” in *Renaissance Medical Learning: Evolution of a Tradition* [= *Osiris* 6 (1990)], 85–117 [repr. in: García Ballester, *Medicine in a Multicultural Society. Christian, Jewish and Muslim Practitioners in the Spanish Kingdoms, 1222–1610* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001),

Essay IV], Hebrew text and translation in “Appendix D,” 107–17. Both editions are highly defective (as are the French paraphrase and English translation accompanying them). In collaboration with Haviva Yishai I have prepared a new edition, based on all extant manuscripts, published in *Korot 23* (2016): 25–52 (Heb.). Here I offer an English translation based on that new critical edition. The paragraph numbers correspond to those in the Hebrew text. The annotation is independent of the preceding article, so as to allow independent perusal. The repetition is minimal, however.

Translation

[1] Thus says Leon Joseph, the translator, resident in Carcassonne.

[2] Ever since I opened my eyes to study and explore the foreign [i.e. profane] sciences—which are many, both in species and in number, like the number of the days of the week, so that they cannot all be subsumed under a single definition—and put my hope in them, so that [I may] acquire knowledge and undertake various inquiries, [ever since then] the merit of these sciences has grown in my eyes above all praise.³⁷ Thus, owing to my great yearning and desire to study them and my craving to investigate them, I followed in the footsteps of our learned sages, those who live today and those of the recent and more distant past, so that I may frame thoughts that would illuminate my eyes, by the light of the intellect and of the heart. For I said [to myself]: they [the sciences] are what enabled the perfect men, who have passed away a long time ago, to attain what they attained.

[3] [However,] I discovered that the deficiency in them [viz. “our learned sages”], as also some of our nation in the present generation, is great and huge and what they say of the profane sciences are like “a sealed book” (*Isa. 29:11*) [i.e. meaningless]. [But] I said [to myself]: “perhaps my desire [for knowledge] is greater than my intellectual capacity, and the [perceived] deficiency is my own, on account of the profundity of what is to be apprehended, and of the shortcomings of my intellect and my understanding, and [on account] of my [intellectual] poverty and weakness, and my incapacity to grasp their idea[s], and is not [due] to their ignorance or lack of knowledge. For [surely] they are “wiser than any man” [after 1 Kgs 5:11], whereas I am only a remnant of their company.” And I was perturbed.³⁸

³⁷ All MSS read, *בעל כל התהלות*, which would refer to the deity (cf. e.g.: *ומען כוונת התפלה הנה השם יתברך מרום מכל תשבחות, מתעללה על כל התהלות, בענן שכותב ומרום על כל ברכה ותלה* (ナムミヤ, b, h). (מדרש בח"ד דין על חמשה חומשי תורה, פרשタ יתרו, על שמות, ב, א)).

But this meaning does not seem to fit the context. I therefore translated following the conjectural emendation *בעל*.

³⁸ *ויהי כמחריש in 1 Sam. 27:10.* probably modeled on *ויהי כמחריד*

[4] Until, after a great effort, I grasped the truth in this matter, and my thoughts [*lit.* discourse] became fertile after having been lean.³⁹ For I realized that there is nothing astonishing in the deficiency that besets a part of the nation: its cause is not unknown, nor is it the case that I do not know what is right.⁴⁰ I was startled by the insight and “for a while I remained wondering” (after Dan. 4:16).

[5] I then heard “a voice speaking” (after Numb. 7:89; Ezek. 2:2): the cause of the deficiency of knowledge and its absence from some of our scholars is not one but many, and this is why the sciences are [too] elevated for them. For they [the sciences] contain intellectual [i.e. philosophical] matters, which are as far from the portion of our masses “as east is from west” (after Ps. 103:12). And *a fortiori* [are they, viz. the sciences, far away] from the principles of the Torah and of the faith. For this reason, some of our sages have refrained from studying them [the sciences], and knowing them, and understanding them.

[6] Even those few, who, by God’s grace, inquired into [the sciences], and picked the food out of the husks,⁴¹ each having employed his intellect to engage in the inquiry,—“he found a pomegranate, ate its fruit and threw out its peel” (after BT Haggigah 15b)—were forced to do this in secret and hidden away, “in the clefts of the rocks and in the hiding places” (Song of Songs 2:14). They were not allowed to teach the rationalist science [*ha-hokmah*] in the marketplaces and in the streets or to discuss it and explain its rationale⁴² or set up a public place of study, [*le-hoshiv yeshivah ba-rabbim*], so as to bring forth the truth properly: for the truth can be known only through its contrary.

[7] [This was so] because they feared the tongues of the multitude of ignoramuses, for they [the true scholars] are few, but the others are legion. In addition, they dreaded some of the Torah scholars [*toriyyim*], who are bare of all other sciences and who intimidate the rationalist inquirers—not by virtue of their [intellectual] power and the breadth of their knowledge, but only on account of the strength of their arms and their many frauds. For the masses heed them, believing that those [rationalist] sciences and those who investigate them are detached from the community of those who adhere to the Torah. Such are the moral qualities of those deficient men who “speak folly” (after Isa. 32:6) of the wise men. I saw what was written about

39 After *Kuzari* 1:28.

40 לא נתעלמה ממנה הלכה: see Rashi on Num. 25:7.

41 לברור האוכל מותו הפטולות echoing b Shabbat 74a.

42 להראות פנים להם see e.g. BT *Eruvin* 13b (infra, nn. 55, 68).

Maimonides's book⁴³ *The Guide of the Perplexed*, and what they did to it in the early days, notwithstanding [the fact] that he [Maimonides] was a majestic scholar, a thousand or ten thousand times⁴⁴ more accomplished in the science of the Torah than they. Justness and truth side with him, as his deeds prove.

[8] As a result [of all the above], the deficiency of some of [our] nation grew and the absence [of learning] increased. [Two, probably corrupted words follow, which make no sense.] On top of this comes another cause: most of the books in those sciences were written by wise men of the Nations, such as the Greeks, the Ishmaelites, or the Christians, and other believers whose religions are different from the religion of the Jews, [so that] their books reached us through the intermediary of the translators. [Now] they or some of them may not have been perfectly proficient in that [source] language or languages, and may have mistaken one word for another, resembling it in its intellectual content [i.e. meaning] or in its external shape [i.e. verbal representation].⁴⁵ Or they may have left out or added words, on account of their defective knowledge of the essence of that [source] language; or there may have been a mistake in the copies from which they translated, and consequently the mistake occurred in those [translated] books, so that [the readers] fail to make sense of them and exhaust themselves [trying to find the sense].

[9] From that [initial] error resulted another, still greater error, for the students of these [translated] works constructed upon the [initial] error a “line of confusion, and stones of emptiness” (Isa. 34:11): when they perceived that there was an error and a doubt [in the text] they endeavored to deepen the interpretations of the phrase or phrases, as if these were Scriptures. On that shaky and feeble foundation they then construct their towers. [However,] the more they advance in interpreting and explaining these phrases, the farther they get from the truth, which they will never meet.⁴⁶ There is no doubt about this!

⁴³ In ms Moscow: ס' הר"ם, which is a nice word play: the abbreviation ר"ם signifies “Rabbi Moses”; but the word רם signifies “elevated.” The corresponding translation is: the elevated book of Rabbi Moses.

⁴⁴ יעלו לאלף ולרבבה, a phrase borrowed from Judah Halevi's poem “על אלף ולרבבה”.

⁴⁵ The author creatively applies here Maimonides's distinction between צלם and דמות in *Guide* 1:1.

⁴⁶ This metaphor is a paraphrase of a sentence in *The Guide of the Perplexed* 1, 73, using the notion of an asymptote as a metaphor: “Know that there are things that a man, if he considers them with his imagination, is unable to represent to himself in any respect, but finds that it is as impossible to imagine them as it is impossible for two contraries to agree. [...] It has been made clear in the second book of the “Conic Sections” that two lines between which there is a certain distance at the outset, may go forth in such a way that the farther they go, this distance diminishes and they come nearer to one another,

[10] I witnessed this with my own “senses and sensibilia.”⁴⁷ It happened to one of the scholars of our nation: he interpreted [or: commented upon] certain phrases in the works of the sage Ibn Sina, in the first translation, that by ha-Me’ati, which at certain places is far from the truth.⁴⁸ So much so that he gathered them [these interpretations] into a book, which he called: “Should Be”⁴⁹ and he set it up as an exemplum and a model. After him there was another scholar, who interpreted Ibn Sina’s words according to his own understanding and the text he had at his disposal. The people followed him and studied out of his books, thinking that he must have had good reasons for what he wrote. Until God sent us the wise [scholar] R. Joseph Lorqi, who enlightened our eyes with his translation, which is the most recent and closest to truth. After which the earlier commentators were perceived to be like a bird in a cage:⁵⁰ [Ibn Sina’s] statements became clear and lucid, leaving them ashamed and disconcerted.⁵¹

[11] We thus saw with our [own] eyes that they [the early scholars] had nothing at all to offer [*lit.* in their hands], and their claims came to nothing. If these wise men lived this day, they would, like ourselves, be ashamed and embarrassed for their views and statements before God, the Awful and Frightful.

but without it ever being possible for them to meet even if they are drawn forth to infinity and even though they come nearer to one another the farther they go. This cannot be imagined and can in no way enter within the net of imagination. Of these two lines, one is straight and the other curved, as has been made clear there in the above-mentioned work.” Quoted after the translation by Shlomo Pines (Chicago, 1963), 1, 210.

47 *Be-huš u-ve-muhaš*: a metaphoric use of the Hebrew title of Aristotle’s work *De Sensu et Sensato* (Sense and Sensibilia; “On sense and what is sensed”) and Averroes’s commentaries on it.

48 The author plays on the fact that Nathan ha-Me’ati’s name is a permutation of the word *emet*, signifying “truth.”

49 **ראוי להיות**. It is not clear to which work the author refers; Steinschneider (*HÜ*, 694) simply translated this purported title. David Wirmer (Cologne) kindly suggested the possibility that the author refers to a collection of textual observations on the translation of the *Canon*, each keyed to a passage and beginning with the words: *ra’uy lihyot*, i.e. “should be,” or “the correct [text] would be ...” Likely **ראוי להיות** was abbreviated as **ל”ר**, in which case subsequent readers and copyists could have taken it as an abbreviation of the more current **רצחא לומר** and integrated it in the text, taking it for a gloss.

50 **בעוף בכלוב**. The sense of this metaphor is not clear. I nonetheless prefer it to the reading of the Paris manuscript (“בכלום”) both on account of the *lectio difficilior potior* consideration and because the word **בכלוב** seems to have been chosen so as to rhyme with **בקרוב**. Steinschneider translates **נעמדו בעוף בכלוב** as “waren gefangen, wie Vögel im Netze” (*HÜ*, 695).

51 The foregoing passage (beginning with “I witnessed this”) is translated in Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 694–95.

However, there is no wonder about [this], because the reason is the flawed translation.

[12] When I recognized that these are the hindering causes, and knowing that these sciences are known among the Christians and their study is formidable and wondrous—[indeed,] who can embrace it all, understand its subject-matter, and encompass it?!—I said to myself: let me learn something of their language and sit in their universities [*yeshivot hem*] and their house of study [*beit 'iyunam*] and follow in their footsteps, so that I may benefit myself and others by grasping their statements and some of the truth of their books. I will apprehend what the perfect ones among them have apprehended,⁵² provided that time will be sufficient, that there are no impediments or accidents and that [my] mind can grasp it without being distracted by [sense perceptions?] to and from it.⁵³

[13] I found that the benefit [in doing this] was very great, inasmuch as their intensive discussions of these sciences is incessant and they omit nothing that is worthy of studying! For they cunningly argue [*mitpalpelim*] about the truth [of theories], even by positing falsehoods. In their disputations they are painstakingly rigorous in their questions and answers, so as to extract the truth from the center of its contrary by examining both sides [*lit. contraries*] of everything, “like a lily among thorns” (Song of Songs 2:2).

[14] In fact, the method which they [the Christians] apply in the study of these sciences today is the same as the method that our sages of earlier generations practiced in studying the science of the Torah, I mean in the Talmud. [For instance:] [The scholars who could make an elephant] “pass through the

⁵² להשקייה is used here and in the sequel in the sense it has in philosophical writings (e.g. מדרגת עין והשקפת שכל, לא השקפת עין, *Guide* 1:8), namely “intellectual understanding.”

⁵³ Both manuscripts have ולא יטרידיו מהחוץ, which seems to be meaningless. I suppose that the text originally had מהוחץ, corrupted into מהחוץ. Leon Joseph argues that the intellect must not be distracted by sense perceptions, a quite common *topos*, as can be gauged from passages like the following:

כִּרְבָּן מִחְשְׁבוֹת הַנוּדָעִים מִאֲנָשֵׁי חַכְמָה נִטְרָדוֹת בְּהַנְּאֹות זֶה הַחוֹשׁ [הַמְשִׁיחַ] וְנִכְסָפוֹת אַלְיוֹן (מוֹזִין ב, לו')

ובן האדם שיש לו חנסה החושים אשר יישגו כל ההרגשות באמצעות. [...] וijk הכה השכל, מן הדברים כלולות ועצמות ופשט חקליות ובדיל המקרים מן העצמים. ואחר שיגיע בנפש הכללות זהה מן הדברים, לא ת策ריך אל החושים וההרגשות. [...] [ן ההרגשות וההחות הגשימות אחר שהושגנו המושכלות [...]]. יטרידיו וימנעו מהשיג אוטו על השילומות ומלהתמיד הדיקות בו, לפי שהascal הפעול שכל פשטונ נקי נבדל מחומר, והנפש לא תשיג הדבקות על האמת בהיותה מסתבכת בחומר. (ס' העיקרים ד, לב)

לפי שהחושים לא די של א' יעוזו להשגת הרוחניות, אבל יטרידיו מהשגת האמת, לפי שלא ישינו מהדבר רק המקרים, כגוןיהם והארוך והרוחב ודומיהם, וזה יביא האדם לחשوب שהדבר הנבדל מהחומר ישיגו המקרים. (ס' העיקרים ב, בט)

eye of a needle.”⁵⁴ [Or] what Rabbi Dosa said: “I have a younger brother whose name is ‘dare-devil,’ with his hairsplitting [*hiddud*] he is able to make permissible what is prohibited, and he has three hundred answers and many reasons to prove that the brothers may marry the daughter’s cowife.”⁵⁵ [Or] the *pilpul* of Rabbi Meir and his companions, [maintaining] that the ruling is not according to what he said, but only according to his decrees;⁵⁶ and Shammai and his court.⁵⁷ All this is made manifest in the appropriate text[s].⁵⁸

[15] Thus, we have been prevented from having knowledge of the sciences and of similar [lore]—not because our intellect is inferior to their intellects, for we minds [*lit.* a heart] just like theirs.⁵⁹ Rather, we have been hindered by

54 BT *Baba Meṣia* 38b: **דָלֶמֶא מִפּוּמְבִּידִיתָא אַתָּה, דָמְעֵילִין פִּילָא בְקֹופָא דְמַחֲטָה?** (Are you from Pumbedita, where they can insert an elephant through the needle’s eye?).

55 BT *Yebamot* 16a:
אָמַר לְהָם: אָח קָטָן יָשׁ לִי, בָכֹור שָׂטָן הָא, וַיַּנְתַּן שָׁמוֹ, וְהָא מַתְלִימִיד שְׁמָאֵי, וְהַזָּהּוּ שֶׁלָּא
יַקְפַּח אֲתֶכְם בְּהַלְכֹתָה, לְפִי שִׁישׁ עַמּוֹ שֶׁלָשׁ מְאוֹת תְּשׁוּבּוֹת בְּצָרַת הַבָּת שְׁהָיָה מוֹתָרָה.
 “‘I have,’ he said to them, ‘a younger brother who is a dare-devil [= keen and obstinate (Rashi)] and his name is Jonathan and he is one of the disciples of Shammai. Take care that he does not overwhelm you on questions of established practice, because he has three hundred answers to prove that the daughter’s cowife is permitted [to the brothers].’”

56 Two texts seem to be involved here.

(i) BT *Eruvin* 13b:

אָרְ אָחָא בָר חָנִינָא: גָלוּי וַיַּדְעַ לְפָנֵי מֵשָׁאָמֵר וְהִיא הָעוֹלָם שָׁאֵין בְּדוֹרוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי מֵיר כִּמְתוֹתָה.
וּמִפְנֵי מָה לֹא קָבַע הַלְכָה כְּמוֹתָו? שֶׁלָא יְכֹל חֲבִירוֹ לְעִמּוֹד עַל סְוףָ דַעַתּו, שֶׁהָא אָוֹמֵר עַל טָמָא
טָהוֹר וּמְרָאָה לֹו פְנִים, עַל טָהוֹר טָמָא וּמְרָאָה לֹו פְנִים.

R. Aha b. Hanina said: It is revealed and known before Him Who spoke and the world came into existence, that in the generation of R. Meir there was none equal to him; then why was not the halakhah set in agreement with his views? Because his colleagues could not fathom the depths of his mind, for he would declare the ritually unclean to be clean and supply plausible proof, the ritually clean to be unclean and also supply plausible proof.

(ii) BT *Eruvin* 47a: He needed to rule like R. Yosi due to Rav Nachman’s teaching, that the halakhah follows R. Meir’s decrees.

וּמְאֵי קֹשְׁיָא: דָלֶמֶא לְאָפּוֹקִי מַדְרָבָ נְחָמָן אָמֵר שְׁמוֹאֵל, דָאָמֵר הַלְכָה כְּרַבִּי מֵיר בְּגִזְוֹרִותִיו?

57 According to Jewish law, a halakhic controversy is usually decided according to the majority. But a well-known talmudic text (b *Yevamot* 14a) suggests that if the minority (in this case: Beit Shammai) is more acute (*מַחְדִּיד טְפִי*) than the majority (here: Beit Hillel) the ruling may be according to its view. I am grateful to Judah Galinsky for this explanation and reference.

58 One wonders why Leon Joseph did not mention the famous saying: “there was a distinguished student in the academy of Yavneh who knew 150 grounds for declaring an impure insect pure” (b *Eruvin* 13b).

59 Perhaps an echo of *Sefer ha-Hinnuk* (ed. Chavel, Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1960), 74:6.

הַלָּא גָם לִי לְבָבָ כָּמוּ הַמָּ, קָטָן עֲבָה מִתְהִנְהָם, וּמְדֻועַ יִמְשְׁבוּנִי הַמָּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם?

the above-mentioned causes, on top of which come our exile and the oppression, [as against the Christians'] pleasures, splendor, and large numbers. This is why they [the Christians] rose ever higher in the profane sciences, whereas we descended on account of the pressing annoyances.

[16] I lived among them [the Christians] for a long time and was ill regarded. For no one of our nation is respectable in their eyes unless he is a physician who cures them of their illnesses. [Such a physician,] however, sits at the table of kings, and is admitted to their presence, be he submissive or standing erect. For he is knowledgeable in the science of medicine, which is the goal [i.e. *telos*] of natural [science] and its yardstick. For the end [*telos*] of natural science is man and his bodily shape and he [man] is [also] the starting point of medical science for he is its object.

[17] I understood this and took it as my lesson [*mašal*]. I told [myself]: let me go to the Jewish physicians and ask them and beseech their honors to have pity upon me and teach me their science, either for a modest fee or for free, because my money had run out and nothing was left. I followed in their footsteps and found in them no perceptible deficiency, except in that one science [medicine]. [This is so] on account of the two aforementioned reasons and two others, which makes four—you may add to these, but not leave out any of them.⁶⁰

[18] Namely: The majority of those of our nation who occupy themselves with the art of medicine have no intention to acquire it thoroughly. Although they have the capacity to inquire into it, they do not want to fatigue their intellect with it. [Instead,] they yawn and say: “this science [*hokmah*] is not a science at all, but rather [merely] an tricky practice [*tahbulah*], a loud tumult, allowing anyone to earn a living.” This they made into their rule to follow [*mashal*]. And they whisper [as if it were] a spell: “who is the clever physician?—The one who demands much money and does not heal for free.” And such a man is called “expert physician,” who through his falsehoods and airs appears knowledgeable to the peoples, [viz.] his being of both natures.⁶¹ How many physicians do we see, who lack understanding [but] have amassed treasures of gold and silver, without any scrutiny.⁶² Others [by contrast] unremittingly stood behind

60 The first two reasons are: deficient translations and absence of public teaching. The two additional reasons are that Jewish physicians “have no intention of acquiring it [medical science] thoroughly,” being only interested in being well paid (§ 18); and that they “study the books of medicine only in their leisure hours” (§ 19). As a good scholar, Leon Joseph knew that four was the canonic number of causes.

61 *היותו מזוה וכן מזוה*, lit. being of this [nature, character?] and also of that [nature, character?]. Perhaps the two “natures” are appearing to be wise and asking for much money.

62 *מבלי בחרינה* here seems to mean “without any thought,” similar to the usage in Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew version of Maimonides, *Guide*, 3:51. The term *בחרינה* can also be taken in a formal sense of “examination,” and would then mean “without having passed any

[i.e. studied] the books and have gained true knowledge,⁶³ but they have not earned any fortune, not even a farthing.

[19] This and another [reason]: they [viz. "the majority of those of our nation who occupy themselves with the art of medicine"] study the books of medicine only in their leisure hours, after passing their time in [such things as]: drinking, eating, having sexual intercourse and [other] shameful things, or in reading a book of fables, delusions and vanities. No one among them wishes to be expert in medicine so as not to enter Gehenna.⁶⁴

[20] Having perceived all this, I said [to myself]: in this our climate there is "no one discerning and wise" (after Gen. 41:39). I [thus] followed in the footsteps of the learned Christians and they directed me to the right path, showed me the ways, and revealed to me the books, both new and old. Among them I saw the discourses of the wise physician Gordon, who in his numerous discourses provides appropriate responses. He excelled in [medical] theory and practice, and earned the crown of a good reputation.⁶⁵ His books are many, so too his magnificence and splendor, and he excelled all his brethren.

[21] Now some of his books have reached us, namely *Shoshan ha-refu'ah* [Lilium medicinae] and *Haqdamat ha-yedi'uh* [Tractatus de prognosticis].⁶⁶ However, they reached us in a very faulty translation, indeed a shaky ladder.

examination." But this seems unlikely to be the intention, for Leon has not yet broached the topic of medical examinations; he simply contrasts the bad physicians who did not at all probe deeply into medicine with those who "have unremittingly studied the books."

63 הַשְׁקָפָה; see above, n. 51.

64 This sentence ironically alludes to the saying (Mishnah *Qiddushin* 4:14): "The best among the physicians to Gehenna" (טוֹב שִׁבְרוֹפָאִים לְגִיהֵןָם). For various translations and the long interpretation history of this saying, see: Fred Rosner, *Medicine in the Bible and the Talmud: Selections from Classical Jewish Sources* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1977), 230–236; Benjamin Gesundheit, "The Best among the Physicians to Gehinom (to Hell)?" *Harefuah* 143.8 (2004): 598–604, 621 [Heb.].

65 See Mishnah *Avot* 4:13: "Rabbi Simeon says: There are three crowns—the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood and the crown of sovereignty, but the crown of good reputation exceeds them all."

(ר֔בִי שְׁמֻעָן אָמַר, שֶׁלְשָׁה כָּתְרִים הֵם, כָּתְרָה תּוֹרָה וּכְתָרָה כָּהָנָה וּכְתָרָה מֶלֶכֶת, וּכְתָרָה שֵׁם טָוב עֹלָה עַל גִּיהֵןָם).

66 These are two well-known works by Gordon. *Lilium medicinae* was translated into Hebrew by Jekutiel ben Solomon in 1387; see Steinschneider, *HÜ*, § 490 (1b), 785–786. *Tractatus de prognosticis* was translated twice, the second time, anonymously, under the title *מִים גָּבוֹן לְלִימָם וּהֱקִדְמָת הַדִּיעָה*, apparently in 1290; see Steinschneider, *HÜ*, § 490 (4b), 787.

For the Jews who translated it [*Shoshan ha-refu'ah*]⁶⁷ in those countries⁶⁸ accessed it only through the vernacular: they vernacularized the Latin [text], heaping up errors. For not every Latin word can be vernacularized and then rendered into the Holy Tongue. Nonetheless, most of that book is comprehensible to us; except for a few places, where I took care to revise it and correct it appropriately, so that every reader can read it [*viz.* the translation] fluently. I did the same with the book *Haqdamat ha-yedi'ah* [Tractatus de prognosticis], whose translator did not pay attention to the truth [i.e. true meanings] of the languages.

[22] When I searched through the satchels of their books I found two new books, comparable to “two golden pipes” (Zech. 4:12). They are very good and worthy, but the sons of our nation lack them. These are: the book of the learned Gerard de Solo and the book by the wise, Master Jean de Tournemire. It has been some ten years since I heard about them, but I could not obtain them—neither in Montpellier, although this is the place from which they hailed [*lit.* were hewn, nor in Avignon, nor in any of the other illustrious places. For they exist in few [copies] only and, moreover, the scholars of Montpellier used to boycott and ostracize whoever sold them to non-Christians. In order to obtain them I spent fortunes, to the utmost of my possibilities, in disregard of everything. And this very year, which is the year ninety-four according to the Christian calendar and reckoning, they came into my possession. Forsooth! I bought them for double their value, out of my desire for them and my yearning and wish to get them.

[23] I [indeed] recognized how exceedingly good they are; they make all topics comprehensible,⁶⁹ and account appropriately for all matters. One who acts according to them will stand like a fortified pillar, not fearing anything, not even the myriads of the company of physicians, if they were to confront him with experiences⁷⁰ and disputations. For [these books] are fine flour; as far as memory reaches there has been nothing like them. I believe they [the two authors] were not sluggish and chose the very best [available] in medicine.

67 Now the singular form is used. The author discusses successively the two “weak” translations; he comes to *Haqdamat ha-yedi'ah* in the sequel of the paragraph.

68 Yekutiel ben Solomon, the translator of *Shoshan ha-refu'ah*, was from Narbonne, which is near Carcassonne, Leon Joseph's hometown. Leon Joseph nonetheless writes “*those* countries” (referring to Narbonne, and more generally, to the Midi) because in 1394 he was expelled from France and settled in Perpignan, then under the Crown of Aragon. See García-Ballester, Ferre, and Feliu, “Jewish Appreciation of Fourteenth-Century Scholastic Medicine,” 93.

69 מראים פנים; see supra, nn. 41 and 55.

70 On the term “experiences” see supra, n. 16.

[24] I now begin with the book of Gerard, which is based on Part IX of the *Almansor*. It is small in quantity, but great in quality; it is “harder than flint” (Ezek. 3:9). It provides appropriate replies and gives correct advice. Its art is safe, and it provides good reasons for all its statements, which is a reason to praise it.⁷¹ Nothing was concealed from him, nor was anything forgotten. Therefore the decision to translate it first was taken in all tranquility.⁷²

[25] If God decrees that I complete this translation, I will thereafter begin [the translation of] Tournemire’s book.⁷³ In his days he was the head⁷⁴ of all the scholars of Montpellier, and they were subordinate to him. I saw him with my own eyes and spoke with him. In his conversation he was gracious, and, his manner was not like that of the scholars of his generation, namely to humiliate the Jews who practice the art of medicine. For he used to direct them with his [intellectual] power. May his soul be bound in the bundle of life of the righteous of the nations.⁷⁵ No other book has been comparable to it in the beauty of its wisdom. It speaks [*lit. spoke*] of the organs and their faculties and of the maladies that afflict them, questioning and answering, clarifying and elucidating, like a father teaching his son.⁷⁶ He [Tournemire] produced new accurate and correct statements, pleasing and agreeable to listeners.

[26] I came up with the idea to translate these books, not for myself but for [the benefit] of others of the people, both contemporaries and those who will come after me, who know nothing of their [the Christians’] language. For when they peruse them and read them and perceive their perfection and the beauty of their arrangement, they will bless me on account of them and will remember me in their hearts, inasmuch as I will be the cause of their livelihood and their ability to hold their ground when confronted by the Christian

⁷¹ וְנוֹתֵן טָעַם לִכְלָדְבָרָיו טָעַם לְשָׁבֶב, *lit.* imparts an improved flavor (after BT *Avodah zarah* 68b).

⁷² On this translation see Steinschneider, *HÜ*, § 496 (1b), 794–797.

⁷³ Jean of Tournemire (ca. 1330–1390/96) was physician to Pope Gregory XI and became chancellor of the University of Montpellier in 1384; see Ernest Wickersheimer, *Dictionnaire biographique des médecins en France au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1936; repr. 1979), 494, and the *Supplement* to the above by Danielle Jacquot (Geneva, 1979), 187.

⁷⁴ I.e. chancellor; see previous note.

⁷⁵ תהיה נפשו צורורה בצורו (החיה), “may his soul be bound in the bundle of life,” derived from 1 Sam. 25:29) to Tournemire, adding the “of the righteous of the nations.” See Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 834, n. 376.

⁷⁶ Two of Tournemire’s works were translated into Hebrew; Leon Joseph may have been the translator of both. See Steinschneider, *HÜ*, § 516, 833–834. The brief description here suggests that Leon Joseph has in mind the *Clarificatorium super Nono Almansoris cum textu ipsius*, written ca. 1365 (see Jacquot, *Supplément*, 187).

physicians [who challenge them] with experiences and disputations.⁷⁷ This will be my second life. I know that with these books they will be able to gainsay the Christians' words. Unless [however] they anoint their flesh with wine, eating and drinking and celebrating, for then the translations will be of no avail to them; it will be as if [the books] were not translated and were removed from their minds.⁷⁸ [By contrast,] if they read them repeatedly, they will derive multiple benefits, they will live in "quietness and in confidence" (Isa. 30:15), and sleep peacefully in their beds; they will not fear the "the voice of the oppressor" (Job 3:18) who beats them with the rod of medicine. For they will be able to fight their battles—they will not dread the crowd of the [Christian] doctors, even though they are shrewd. They [the Christian doctors] may [then] hide and conceal all the other books of the art of medicine—but with these two books they [the Jews] will utterly destroy them.⁷⁹ For this reason, I "mastered the books" (Dan. 9:2) and bought them, in order to benefit myself by reading them and to benefit others by translating them.

[27] Now this book, called "Gerard de Solo," which is a commentary on Book 9 of the *Book of Almansor* [*Practica super nono Almansoris*], is divided into the same parts and chapters as al-Rāzī divided his book into. If this scholar [Gerard] did not detail them at the beginning of his book, as the authors of books usually do, it is because he put his confidence in those who understand. I [nonetheless] prepared [a list of the] chapters, one after the other, from the beginning to the end, so that anyone can find what he is seeking as he wishes, without getting his thoughts confused or distracted. I also decided to append to some chapters questions and answers in the form of disputations, which I found written and scattered here and there, some ascribed to the wise author [Gerard], others to another beneficent scholar who makes [others] happy. Some [questions and answers] I invented myself, according to my capability, when I did not find an "appointed person" [i.e. someone apposite at the right time],⁸⁰ with whom to discuss the purpose of that chapter so as to sharpen the intellect, make it astute, and understand that chapter correctly. At the beginning of any question that is not in the [Latin] book itself you will find

⁷⁷ Cf. §23.

⁷⁸ מורה ל'יבותם; see Ben Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 2865.

⁷⁹ The translation of the last phrase is uncertain.

⁸⁰ איש עתִי (Lev. 16:21), a man who led away the scapegoat on Yom Kippur, interpreted by rabbinic authorities as someone who had been "appointed," i.e. designated in advance (BT *Yoma* 62b).

ALYH, which is my name as an acronym [=Amar Leon Yoseph Ha-ma'atiq; Leon Joseph the translator said], so that you will know they have been added.⁸¹

[28] If here or there you find some locutions that are equivocal⁸² do not blame me in your heart and do not despise me in your soul before you check a copy of the [Latin] book—if God granted you knowledge of their tongue⁸³—or you may ask a wise Christian physician. For there were errors in the copy from which I translated. Although I checked it against other copies, two or three times, “they are all woven in the same web” [after BT Berakhot 24a], they seem all to be quarried from a single mine and to have issued from a single source. For those passages that are doubtful, I will “stretch my hand over it” [BT Hagigah 5b], or put another indication in the margin, to alert the reader and inform him that these [difficulties] did not escape me, and you can correct it for me.

[29] Now you, the community of physicians, my brethren! When you read the author’s introduction you will see that he is “tying crown[s]”⁸⁴ and praying to his king and his God, addressing himself upward, affirming the unity, trinity and duplicity⁸⁵—[all this] I translated word for word! Do not speak ill of me, do not rail against me, for after the introduction you will have no [cause for] complaint [against me]. For my intention is pleasing⁸⁶ [namely] that the book reach you without any omission or deficiency occurring in it, so that you may grasp it in its entirety and so that you may be able to refute it out of its

⁸¹ Leon Joseph did the same thing in other translations as well, e.g., that of Ps.-Galen’s *Prognostica de decubitu ex mathematica scientia*; see Steinschneider, HÜ, 666. The work is identified in Gerhard Fichtner, *Corpus galenicum. Bibliographie der galenischen und pseudogalenischen Werke*, Internet publication (downloadable from http://cmg.bbaw.de/online-publikationen/Galen-Bibliographie_2012_08_28.pdf; seen Jan. 1, 2016), § 126 (the author is Imbrasius of Ephesus, 4th century).

⁸² מסופקוֹת. The author uses a technical logical term whose precise meaning is “amphibolous,” i.e., a name referring to two different essences that share some inessential aspect. See, e.g., [Maimonides], *Treatise on Logic*, chapter 13.

⁸³ אם חנוך האל לדעת לשונם:

אתה חונן לאדם דעתך [...] חננו מאתיך דעתה בינה והשכל.

“You favor man with wisdom. [...] Endow us graciously from Yourself with wisdom, insight, and discernment.”

⁸⁴ קושר כתרים לאותיות, i.e., “tying crowns [i.e. serif] on the letters [of the Torah]”; BT *Shabbat* 89a.

⁸⁵ There are several allusions to the number three in Gerard’s introduction, including to the Trinity. Leon Joseph here uses some ironic rhetorical flourishes to make these discussions acceptable to his Jewish reader, which need not be taken literally. As noted previously, in one of the manuscripts a diligent user scrupulously blotted out with black ink all the religiously sensitive making them unreadable and providing in the margin religiously “permissible” alternatives. See supra, pp. 42–43.

⁸⁶ Allusion to *Kuzari* 1:1.

own statements and rebuke its statements.⁸⁷ But if you do not wish to read the introduction, you can start reading at the beginning of the book itself. [For my part,] however, I did not wish to omit anything that is in it; rather, I wished to add to it.⁸⁸

[30] I will now write down all the medicinal compounds in Latin,⁸⁹ after first translating them into our tongue, by God's decree, so as to be helpful to the neophytes in this art: they will be able to organize [their knowledge] without toil or fatigue [i.e. have them at their fingertips], to view themselves as learned and wise, accomplished veterans in the art, even though they are beginners who have never seen the lights in the art. The apothecaries⁹⁰ will not denigrate them, and they will not have to consult pharmacopeias if they know the names of the medicines by heart. As is written: "[God] shall keep your foot from being snared" (Prov. 3:26). He will then be considered a distinguished physician.

[31] This is my intent. And God knows what I desire in my heart and I beseech Him to assist me and direct me in my translation and give me the ability to bring my work to completion and to translate the other work together with it.

[32] May He reveal to me the wonders of His Torah and send us His Messiah. AAA NNN SSS (= amen, nesah [= eternity], sela, repeated three times).

87 מחרות הימן האורחי here has the same meaning as in Alharizi's introduction to *Mahalliyot*: מהללי here has the same meaning as in Alharizi's introduction to *Mahalliyot* / והתבונתם למלוי / כי אין מזב נחשליו / ואין משב אבק רגלו / מה נפלאו מעלייו / ומה נעמו מהלליו / ומה מתכו משלליו / צל עדן צלליו / וטל אורה טלליו ..

88 Leon Joseph makes a similar apology in the introduction to his (later) translation of Gerard de Solo's *Introductorium juvenum, sive corporis humani* etc. There he writes: "I have decided to translate [this work], word-by-word so that not even a single word will be missing, from beginning to end, until I complete the task. Perhaps some haughty man will complain about [the fact that] I have translated the totality of the author's words and have not modified his text when he gives grace to his god, in accordance with the usage of his religion and the law of his faith. And perhaps he will despise me in his heart. But I will reply him according to his folly (after Prov. 26:4), for I have a heart as he has, perhaps even more, in order to glorify Him Who spoke and the world was (after the Morning Service). For He only is worthy of thanks and no one else. But in all the books that I translated my practice was to translate word by word, from the first word to the last, my intention being that there be no deficiency in the [translated works]. I beseech God to assist me and indicate the right path in my translation." Text in: Renan-Neubauer, *Les Écrivains juifs français du XIV^e*, 776.

89 In fact: in vernacularized Latin.

90 הַעֲטָרִים; an infrequent word, whose meaning was established by comparing the Hebrew and Latin versions of De Solo's *De febribus*. See the texts in Lola Ferré, "La versión hebrea del tratado *De febribus* de Gerard de Solo," *MEAH*, Hebrew Section 45 (1996): 149–83, comparing 165:12 with 164:12. It is apparently a loan translation from the Arabic root 't.r. (= perfume, essence; cognate with the English "attar"). Already noted in Steinschneider, *HÜ*, 799, n. 214.

CHAPTER 3

Better Muslim or Jew? The Controversy around Conversion across Minorities in Fifteenth-Century Castile

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Abstract

This article presents the *Responsio in quaestione de muliere sarracena transeunte ad statum et ritum iudaicum* (1451) by Alonso Fernández de Madrigal, “El Tostado” (1410–55), as a rich source for the study of conversion across minority groups. A trial conducted before the archbishop of Toledo concerning a Muslim woman turned Jew by her lover in Talavera de la Reina (Spain) caused a scandal in Christian society. As one of the most outstanding legal scholars at the University of Salamanca, Madrigal established the right of the archbishop of Toledo to judge an issue involving the two minorities and decided in favor of the woman returning to her faith of origin, instead of imposing the death penalty. While conversion superseded issues of illicit sexual relations, gender acted as a mitigating circumstance. This article will also consider how the three communities contributed to the survival of “cohabitation,” defined by Madrigal as social peace, and the preservation of the status of the different religions living together in Castile.

Keywords

Conversion – Muslim-Christian relations – Jewish-Muslim relations – early humanism – Alonso de Madrigal el Tostado – coexistence – cohabitation

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In 1451, a scandal was brought before the archbishop of Toledo's court involving the *aljamas* of the Muslims and Jews of Talavera de la Reina, a city near Toledo that fell under the jurisdiction of the archbishop.¹ Talavera, a mid-sized city that had been one of the most important settlements on the banks of the Tajo river, in the Taifa of Toledo, had been granted, first, to Queen Mary of Portugal in 1328 as dower, and later had been added to the domains of the archbishop of Toledo. Both minorities lived side by side in Talavera under the supervision of the canons of Saint Mary the Great. This massive collegiate church had been built in Gothic style over the former great mosque, and thereafter the Muslims had been granted another mosque beside the main square, facing the church.² Likewise, the synagogue was placed just behind Saint Mary, between this church and the old *alcázaba*.³

This special connection to the canons of Saint Mary is probably the reason why the accusation made by the Muslim *aljama* as a collective body against

¹ The first to call attention to this controversy in the field of Jewish studies was Ángel Gómez Moreno, "An Unknown Jewish-Christian Controversy in 15th c. Talavera de la Reina: Towards the End of the Spanish Jewry," in *Nunca fue pena mayor. Estudios de literatura española en homenaje a Brian Dutton*, ed. Ana Menéndez Collera and Victoriano Roncero (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1996), 285–92. See also David Nirenberg, "Love between Muslim and Jew in Medieval Spain: A Triangular Affair," in *Jews, Muslims, and Christians in and around the Crown of Aragon: Essays in Honour of Professor Elena Lourie*, ed. Harvey J. Hames (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 127–56, here at 143–44. Neither of these two authors establish that Alonso de Madrigal's *Responsio* was explicitly written in connection with the scandal, although Nirenberg implies that he had the case in mind. As we shall see, the two sources—Biblioteca Nacional de España (hereinafter BNE), MS Res. 35, which contains records from the trial, and Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca (hereinafter BUS), MS 70, containing the *Responsio*—need to be studied together in the context of conversion and not just of illicit sexual relations among minorities.

² Yolanda Moreno, "Los mudéjares talaveranos y sus actividades laborales durante el siglo XV," *Cuaderna. Revista de estudios humanísticos de Talavera y su antigua tierra* 18–19 (2010–11): 51–75, here at 61, mentions a 1427 papal bull in which the former mosque is mentioned. More evidence on the new mosque can be found in Yolanda Moreno, "Los mudéjares de Talavera y su casa de oración: El aljeme," *Cuaderna. Revista de estudios humanísticos de Talavera y su antigua tierra* 20 (2014), 103–18, and *Mudéjares in Talavera de la Reina (1450–1502)*. (Talavera: Ayuntamiento, 2018). About the development of the Muslim *aljama*, see Yolanda Moreno, "El papel de los mudéjares de Talavera en el siglo XV en el contexto del concejo," in *De la alquería a la aljama*, ed. Ana Echevarría and Adela Fábregas (Madrid: UNED, 2016), 369–89; I thank Yolanda Moreno for her useful comments and insights into the *morería* of Talavera.

³ César Pacheco Jiménez, "La comunidad judía de Talavera de la Reina en el siglo XV," *Cuaderna: revista de estudios humanísticos de Talavera y su antigua tierra* 7–8 (1999–2000): 71–108, here at 77–78 and 81–82.

the Jewish community and, especially, one of its members was placed before a Christian judge. The Muslims protested that a Jew named Yuda in the sources had kidnapped a young, unnamed Muslim girl from her father's house and had converted her to Judaism in order to marry her.⁴ The legitimacy of the local Christians' mediation in such an affair, which should have remained between the two minorities, was questionable even to the Christians themselves, although it was common practice for both Muslims and Jews to opt for Christian judges and attorneys to hear their cases in several cities in Castile. But from the very beginning of this controversy, we are faced with political strategizing on both sides that makes this trial an extraordinary case study.

The first unexpected turn of events is the decision of the Muslim *aljama* to plead before Christian judges, without stating their real aim. Nowhere do we find their demands, whether they wanted the girl to return to her home and to her faith, despite the loss of her virginity and the damage to the honor of her family and community, or any other kind of outcome they wanted for the affair. A return to her original faith was possible, at least theoretically, according to the interpretation of Islamic law among Mudejar communities in the fifteenth century. Islamic law, as preserved in the *Leyes de moros* (Laws of the Moors), a fifteenth-century code based on older legal works,⁵ includes a provision on precisely this question:

⁴ The same subterfuge was used in another case, this time of a Christian woman, Ona, who was reportedly abducted by the Muslims of Calatorao, converted to Islam, and then married a Muslim (1282). There is no reference to this case in the text by Madrigal, proving that practical issues dealt with at the king's court did not necessarily become legal precedent, and even less so in a neighboring kingdom. Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Cancillería, Reg. 46, 75v, cit. Brian A. Catlos, *The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims of Catalonia and Aragon, 1050–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 31. Other cases known from the Crown of Aragon showed the opposite direction of conversion, namely from Jew to Muslim, as studied by David Romano, "Conversión de judíos al Islam (Corona de Aragón 1280 y 1284)," *Sefarad* 36, no. 2 (1976): 333–37. For previous cases, see Mercedes García-Arenal, "Rapports entre les groupes dans la Péninsule Ibérique: La conversion des juifs à l'Islam (XII^e–XIII^e siècles)," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 63–64 (1992), 91–102.

⁵ Alfonso Carmona González, "Textos jurídico-religiosos islámicos de las épocas mudéjar y morisca," *Áreas. Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 14 (1992): 13–26, here at 20–21, 23; Alfonso Carmona González, "El autor de las *Leyes de moros*," in *Homenaje al Prof. José M. Fórneas Besteiro* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1995), 957–62; Soha Abboud-Haggag, "Las leyes de moros son el libro de *al-Tafri*," *Cuadernos de Historia del Derecho* 4 (1997): 163–201; Juan Carlos Villaverde Amieva, "El papel de Francisco Antonio González sobre 'códices escritos en castellano con caracteres árabes'" (Real Academia de la Historia, año 1816) y noticia de las copias modernas de *Leyes de moros*, in *Aljamías. In memoriam Álvaro Galán de Fuentes y Jacob M. Hassan*, ed. Raquel Suárez García and Ignacio Ceballos (Gijón: Trea, 2012), 131–214.

Title CLXIII, about he who turned to another law and wants to return to the former one

Anyone who converted to another law should be persuaded against returning to his former faith. And if he was offered to return to his law and he refused, they should cut his head, and his property should be owned by those Muslims who should have it. And if someone is suspected of being unfaithful, do not take it into account if his heart is certainly in chaos/insanity (*ahinna*). *And if a woman is turned to another law and does not wish to return to the law where she belonged, kill her.* And they should kill a servant who turns to another law. *Moreover, a female servant, a Christian or a Jew who might turn to each other's law, they should not be punished, and each should be asked in which faith he or she wants to remain.*⁶

We can also trace this law in the longer *Tafri* by Ibn al-Jallāb al-Basrī, an eleventh century legal treatise still circulating widely among Muslims in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which states:

On the renegade. Qala, he said: and whoever turns to another faith and then wishes to return to the faith of alislam, let repentance be given to him; for if he repents, they should receive his repentance; and if he refuses, let him be wounded in his neck and killed, and his goods should be gained by the community of Muslims. And they should not be inherited by his Muslim heirs or by the unfaithful. And whoever is forced into unfaithfulness, there is no punishment on him, as his heart will be calmed by his faith. And when a woman is turned to another faith, if she does not repent, she should be killed, and the same applies to a captive, kill him

6 “*Titulo CLXIII, del que se tornare a otra ley e se quisiere tornar a la primera.* El que se tornare de otra ley fablaran contra que se quiera tornar a su ley primera. Et si quisiere tornarse a su ley e non quisiere, tajallean la cabeza, e su aver que lo aya el que lo tomare de los muçlimes. Et sy sospechase de alguno que esta sobre ellalcofre non le enpesca sy su coraçon fuese cierto en *ahinna*. Et sy la muger se tornare a otra ley et non quisiere tornar a su ley commo era, que la maten. Et el syervo matallean sy se tornare a otra ley. Et otrosy la syerva et el christiano et el judio, sy se tornaren los unos a la ley de los otros, non les enpesca, et preguntarlean sobre qual ley quiere estar.” Law 164, according to the list of contents, later transformed into law 180 in the text. *Leyes de moros*, Royal Library of Sweden, ms Tilander Esp. 1, contents in fol. 3r, law in fols. 54–55. See Ana Echevarría, “Conversion religieuse et législation islamique: sur l'apostasie et la réconciliation (Espagne, xv^e siècle),” in *Pouvoir politique et conversion religieuse. 1. Normes et mots*, ed. Thomas Lienhard and Isabelle Poutrin (Rome: École Française, 2017) <https://books.openedition.org/efr/3400>.

when he converts to another faith. And when the unfaithful turns from one law to another, there is no punishment on him.⁷

Since avoiding punishment for the woman was the original intent of the Muslim *aljama*, the charges were carefully designed to conceal the fact that the girl probably consented and both married and converted willingly, in order to start a Jewish family, as is shown by the willingness of the Jewish community to accept the conversion and the couple as part of their group. Therefore, Yuda was not charged with rape, only with kidnapping. Trial began over the question of whether this conversion was licit. Had it involved only the Muslim *aljama*, the archbishop would undoubtedly have taken counsel from Farax el-Çadafe,⁸ at the time *alcalde mayor de las aljamas del reino* (Muslim judge of appeals before the royal courts), a resident of Toledo and master of the works of the royal *alcázares*.⁹ And in fact, as we shall see, his well-founded opinion may indeed have been taken into consideration for the final decision in this trial.

⁷ “En lo tornadizo. Qala, dixo: i quien se fará de otro adín i se retornara del addin del alislam, seale dado repintencia; pues si s’arrepentira, recíban su arrepintencia; i si refusará, fieran su persona en su cuello i matenlo, i sea su algo ganancia por el alyama'a de los muslimes, i no lo eredan sus erederos de los muslimes ni de los descreyentes. *I quien sera forçado sobre la descreyencia, pues no ay cosa sobre, cuano sera su coraçon asosegado con la creyencia.* I cuando se tornara a otro adin la mujer i no se arrepentira, matenla; i asimesmo al cativo, matenlo cuando se tornara a otro addin. I cuando se tornara que se mudara el descreyente de una regla a regla otra, pues no ay cosa sobre.” S. Abboud-Haggar, ed., *El tratado jurídico de al-Tafrī' de Ibn al-Çallāb*, 2 vols. (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1999), 2: 571–72. In the translation, the redundancy “qala/dixo” is kept throughout the text to reflect the style of the Aljamiado rendering, sometimes confusing and reiterative. This same issue appears in Yça de Gabir, *Breviario sunní. De los principales mandamientos y devedamientos de nuestra santa ley y çunna*, Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás, CSIC, Madrid, MS RESC 60, chap. 51, 72r–73r.

⁸ Seeking counsel from Islamic judges on matters of their faith and law was a common use among royal judges, but it has seldom left written records. For some cases, see Jean-Pierre Molénat, “Alfaquies anonymes dans la Castille des Rois Catholiques: un procès d’héritage entre moros d’Extrémadoure, 1495,” in *Biografías mudéjares. La experiencia de ser minoría: biografías mudéjares en la España cristiana*, ed. A. Echevarría (Madrid: CSIC, 2008), 417–67; Ana Echevarría, *The City of the Three Mosques: Ávila and its Muslims in the Middle Ages* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011), 89–92, 102–103.

⁹ On Farax al-Çadafi, see Jean-Pierre Molénat, “Une famille de l’élite mudéjare de la Couronne de Castille. Les Xarafí de Tolède et Alcalá de Henares,” in *Mélanges Louis Cardaillac. Études réunies et préfacées par Abdeljalil Temimi*, 2 vols. (Zaghuan: Fondation Temimi, 1995), 2: 765–72, here at 768; Ana Echevarría, “De cadí a alcalde mayor. La élite judicial mudéjar en el siglo xv,” *Al-Qantara* 24, no. 1 (2003): 139–68, here at 150–52. According to Yolanda Moreno, “La interacción en el espacio de dos sociedades diferentes: concordia establecida entre el

Once the trial crossed the boundary between the minorities' jurisdictions, it affected the innermost convictions of Christian judges, who started considering "whether Christians should permit others to fall into evil." Legal experts consulted by ecclesiastical authorities—who were the jurisdictional lords in Talavera, as opposed to other cities that fell under royal or noble lordship—transformed the trial into a controversy about which of the two evils was worse for the believer and for the Church, which had lost the opportunity of a conversion to Christianity. The court had to decide on the responsibilities such a conversion entailed for each and every participant in the drama, according to the text of the *Responsio*.¹⁰

This work was ordered in order to appease the concerns of Christian authorities about the legal nature of this issue. It seems that Archbishop Alfonso Carrillo de Acuña (1446–82) had serious doubts about his competence to judge this case and therefore asked Alonso Fernández de Madrigal, "El Tostado" (1410–55), one of the most important experts in canon law trained at the University of Salamanca, to provide some legal basis to support his intervention, as we know from one of the copies of the proceedings of this trial, compiled by a servant of Alonso de Cartagena, bishop of Burgos (c. 1385–c. 1456), possibly Alvaro de Villaescusa, who signed one of the translations in the same manuscript.¹¹

Alonso Fernández was born in Madrigal de las Altas Torres, attended grammar school at the Franciscan convent in Salamanca, and joined the famous university to study Philosophy, Theology, Canon and Civil Law, Greek, and Hebrew.¹² The atmosphere in Salamanca was particularly influential in his

bachiller Hernando Alonso y la aljama de moros de Talavera," in *Law and Religious Minorities in Medieval Societies: Between Theory and Praxis*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, John Tolan and Ana Echevarría (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016): 211–228, there was a local *alcalde* in Talavera at a later date.

¹⁰ BNE, MS Res. 35, 101r–112v.

¹¹ Although Nirenberg, who first presented the two works together, does not propose a link between them, the fact that Madrigal's treatise is presented as a *responsio* suggests that there was. More importantly, there is a marginal note in the manuscript of Alonso de Cartagena saying, "Aunque lo que el señor obispo de Avila sobresto al señor arçobispo escrivio yo no lo tengo nin se falla escrito en este proçesso pero creo que los letrados del señor arçobispo sin dubda lo tengan e lo daran a vuestra merçed." BNE, MS Res. 35, 101v.

¹² For his biography, see Emiliiano Fernández Vallina, "Introducción al Tostado. De su vida y de su obra," *Cuadernos salmantinos de filosofía* 15 (1988): 153–77; "Alfonso Fernández de Madrigal El Tostado," in *El gobierno ideal*, ed. Nuria Bellos Martín (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2003), 13–20; and the special issue on El Tostado: *La corónica* 33, no. 1 (2005); and more recently Nuria Bellos Martín, "Alfonso Fernández de Madrigal," in *Diccionario Biográfico Español*,

work.¹³ When he was twenty-two, he started teaching at the College of Saint Bartholomew and was soon chosen as part of the Castilian delegation to the Council of Basel (1431–45), the meeting point of the most remarkable canonists of his time. There he must have encountered Juan de Segovia, whose works might have escaped his attention in Salamanca, since Segovia was in Rome at the time of Alonso de Madrigal's studies there, but who, as a representative of the conciliarist faction, had some indirect influence on Madrigal.¹⁴ Denounced before Pope Eugene IV in Siena (1443) for defending a heretic, Madrigal ended up secluded in the Carthusian monastery of Scala Dei (Tarragona). King John II of Castile interceded, and he was granted the position of *maestrescuela* at the University of Salamanca in 1446, where he wrote this *responsio*.¹⁵

Alonso de Madrigal's intellectual life encompassed different fields and interests, and as a renowned canonist he was consulted about a variety of matters. Apart from his exegetical commentaries on the Bible and his contribution to the conciliarist debate with a treatise entitled *Defensorium trium conclusiōnum*, where he maintained the precedence of councils over the pope, he wrote a very practical *Breve forma de confesión*. His works written for members of the

Real Academia de la Historia, <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/12645/alfonso-fernandez-de-madrigal>. Last checked 26/4/19. Editions of his works, which never include this treatise, were published in Venice in 1507–47 (13 vols.), 1615 (24 vols.), and 1728 (27 vols.).

¹³ Miguel Anxo Pena González, "La(s) Escuela(s) de Salamanca. Proyecciones y contextos históricos," in *Universidades hispánicas. Colegios y conventos universitarios en la Edad Moderna* 2 vols., ed. Luis E. Rodríguez San Pedro and Juan Luis Polo Rodríguez (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2010), 2:185–240; Inmaculada Delgado Jara, "El Tostado y la exégesis bíblica," in *La primera Escuela de Salamanca (1406–1516)*, ed. Cirilo Flórez Miguel, Maximiliano Hernández Marcos and Roberto Albares (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2012), 55–74.

¹⁴ Benigno Hernández Montes, *Biblioteca de Juan de Segovia. Edición y comentario de su escritura de donación* (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Francisco Suárez, 1984), 7; Alfonso de Madrigal el Tostado, *El gobierno ideal*, ed. and trans. Nuria Bellosa (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2003), 14. However, the influence of Segovia's ideas on his work still needs to be evaluated. Of all the *repetitios* written by Segovia during his time in Salamanca, the one delivered in 1427, dealing with Islam and the figure of Muhammad, might still have been circulating at the University. Davide Scotto, "Inseguire l'Islam tra memoria e teologia. Spigolature su Juan de Segovia intorno al 1427," in *Ottant'anni da maestro. Saggi degli allievi offerti a Giorgio Cracco*, ed. Daniela Rando, Paolo Cozzo and Davide Scotto (Rome: Viella, 2014), 101–39, here at 109–22. Recently, Anne Marie Wolff, *Juan de Segovia and the Fight for Peace: Christians and Muslims in the Fifteenth Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219–1549)*, 3 vols. (Salamanca, Lisbon: Universidad de Salamanca, Fundación Calouste Gulbenkian, 1966–67), 3: n. 1150. Fernández Vallina, "Introducción al Tostado," 158.

royal entourage—such as *Breviloquio de amor e amicícia* (c. 1437–41), dedicated to King John II of Castile, the *Libro de las figuratas paradoxas* (c. 1437), written for Queen Mary, or his translation of Eusebius's *Chronography* for the Marquis of Santillana—made him one of the most notable *letrados* and courtiers of his time.¹⁶ In addition, his political works were disseminated as lessons (*relectio*) given at the University of Salamanca, such as *De optima politia*, a meditation on the different forms of government that existed during his time and which was the most suitable for Castile, namely monarchy. This work gained the favor of the king, who made him chancellor, and he and his disciples Pedro Martínez de Osma and Fernando de Roa became trusted members of the king's council. His travels to Italy and his education made him a good representative of early Castilian Humanism. And the fact that *De optima politia* was written in 1446, only six years before the *Responsio*, speaks for the connections between the two works, as we shall see.

When, as a result of the accusation in Talavera, Alonso de Madrigal was asked to write his *Responsio in quaestione de muliere sarracena transeunte ad statum et ritum iudaicum*, he chose a slightly different form of discourse.¹⁷ Insofar as the literary genre is concerned, we are not dealing here with a *disputatio*, an *apologia*, or a *confutatio*, the most popular genres for interreligious polemics, but with a *responsio*, a term that may be translated as “refutation” or, in a legal context, “reply.” Given that the archbishop of Toledo was looking for legal advice, the second meaning is probably more accurate. However, given the religious tone of the controversy, an additional layer of meaning must be considered too, since the text makes an effort to refute the advantages of the Jewish faith over the Christian one, which in the eyes of the judges should always be preferred.

But there are still other issues that a lawyer like Madrigal would take into account. The scholastic tradition of the *quaestio-responsio*, usually combined with exegesis to provide a more flexible format for practical issues, had been practiced since the times of Maximus the Confessor.¹⁸ One of the authorities

¹⁶ Apart from the editions mentioned in the footnotes, and since it is impossible to include here all of Madrigal's works, see details and updated bibliography for these and other works in El Tostado, *El gobierno ideal*, 47–54, and Fernando Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. Vol. 3, Los orígenes del Humanismo. El marco cultural de Enrique III y Juan II* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2002), 2643–61, 3043–47.

¹⁷ Untitled. The rubric “Casus reservati Papae et Episcopo et casus excommunicationis” is clear about the contents of the manuscript. BUS, MS 70, 1r.

¹⁸ As shown by Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the Quaestiones Ad Thalassium (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity)* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

cited by Madrigal is actually Oldradus da Ponte, the famous fourteenth-century Italian canonist who was an authority in both canon and civil law. His collection of *consilia*, and *quaestiones* written in the style of *consilia*, used to resolve court cases or as preliminaries to legislation or administrative decisions and compiled in the mid-fourteenth century by his followers, helped establish the *consilium* as the most important genre of later medieval jurisprudential writing.¹⁹ This was the style chosen by Madrigal, despite calling it a *responsio*. In the Iberian context, Madrigal would have expected his work to be compared with *responsa* given by Muslims and Jews as legal advice, which is exactly what this case required. All three genres—*fatāwa* for Muslims, *teshuvot* (*responsae*) for Jews, and *responsiones* for Christians—consisted of answers to legal questions. For instance, *responsa* is a rabbinic term denoting an exchange of letters in which one party consults another on a halakhic matter.²⁰ The *fatāwa* share the same principle, being ad-hoc responses to specific questions, often regarding situations unaddressed by the general rules of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).²¹ All these were widely used in the Iberian Peninsula at the time of Madrigal's work. This latter Christian *responsio* takes arguments from polemical and apologetic treatises, but goes beyond the exegetical discussion, since it was intended as a legal answer requested by the archbishop of Toledo to the question of who was qualified to judge the case, and whether Christian authorities could pronounce on this issue, which affected Jews and Muslims, but not so clearly Christians.

Alonso de Madrigal is, therefore, writing a legal consultation about the limits of religious jurisdiction and the legal responsibility of the different parties in the conversion of a young woman, and now we know that the *Responsio in quaestione de muliere sarracena* certainly addresses a real case.²² The rest of

¹⁹ William Stalls, "Jewish Conversion to Islam: The Perspective of a *Quaestio*," *Revista Española de Teología* 43 (1983): 235–51; Norman Zacour, *Jews and Saracens in the Consilia of Oldradus de Ponte* (Toronto, Buffalo: Pontifical Institute Studies and Texts, 1990).

²⁰ The classical work on this subject in Iberia is Isidore Epstein, *The "Responsa" of Rabbi Solomon Ben Adreth of Barcelona (1235–1310) as a Source of the History of Spain: Studies in the Communal Life of the Jews in Spain as Reflected in the "Responsa"* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925), although *responsae* appear in one way or another in the discussion of everyday life practices in the *aljamas* of the whole Iberian Peninsula.

²¹ David S. Powers, *Law, Society and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and Knut S. Vikor, *Between God & the Sultan. A History of Islamic Law* (Londres: C. Hurst & Co., 2005) show how these legal opinions interact with other sources in trials.

²² BUS, MS 70 (from now on, Madrigal, *Responsio*), 1r. An edition and study of the manuscript is being prepared. Although the *responsio* is not signed, its authorship can be

the evidence about the trial is provided by another manuscript preserved in the National Library of Spain dated c. 1457. It consists of a number of works compiled by Álvaro de Villaescusa, assistant to Alonso de Cartagena, for an anonymous patron who seems to be another bishop or the like. The companion works are, interestingly enough, a copy of the *Anacephaleosis* by Alonso de Cartagena and other works by him, as well as the only extant translation of the *Disputatio Abutalib*, by Alfonso Buenhombre. These works joint together in a sort of *vademecum*, provide some insight on the interests of polemicists engaged in different forms of controversy against the Jews in the context of the struggle against Jewish *conversos* in fifteenth-century Castile.²³ The proceedings of the Talavera trial include the claim by the Christian attorneys who received the complaint from the Muslim *aljama*, the response by the rabbi and the Jewish *aljama*, and a counter-argument by Christian attorneys on behalf of the Muslims.²⁴ Although religious dispute pervades both the treatise by Madrigal and the proceedings, especially in Madrigal's discussion of the legitimacy of conversion and the arguments of the Christian attorneys in their appeals to the archbishop—some of them based on the metaphor of the spatial dimension of the synagogue as representative of the body of the convert who receives the new faith—both of them go beyond the boundaries of the polemical genre because of their practical nature.

deduced from the fact that it was consulted by the Christian authorities, one of whom wrote "Autore Tostato" on fol. 72, and from the previous (*De Beata Trinitate*) and subsequent (*Questiones temptativas de transitu et Nativitate Christi*) works contained in the same binding, both authored by him. On the whole, six treatises out of eleven in this manuscript were surely written by Madrigal. Confirmation of this comes from BNE, MS Res. 35, as stated previously.

²³ This atmosphere and the literature it produced, in Bruce Rosenstock, "Against the Pagans: Alonso de Cartagena, Francisco de Vitoria and *converso* political theory," in *Marginal Voices: Studies in Converso Literature of Medieval and Golden Age Spain*, ed. Amy I. Aronson-Friedman and Gregory B. Kaplan (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 117–39.

²⁴ Ángel Gómez-Moreno, "An Unknown Jewish-Christian," 287–89; Nirenberg, "Love Between Muslim," 143–44. On the *Disputatio Abutalib*, see editions and updated bibliography in Antoni Biosca i Bas, "Alfonso Buenhombre," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History. Vol. 5, 1350–1500*, ed. David Thomas et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 68–69; Luciano Serrano y Pineda, *Los conversos D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena, obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores* (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Hebraicos, 1942); Alonso de Cartagena, *Defensorium unitatis christiana*, ed. Manuel Alonso (Madrid: CSIC, 1943); Luis Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena (1385–1456). Una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV* (Valladolid: Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 2002); and Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena. Iglesia, política y cultura en la Castilla del siglo XV* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2003).

Madrigal starts his argument describing the case very briefly, without any mention of the actual events, which will only start to become clear later on when he starts to apply the theoretical arguments he had developed before, while naming specifics from the trial, like the fact that the accused is a woman and that a Christian notary has given witness, thus appearing to be complicit with the Jewish community.²⁵ Once the situation has been explained, Madrigal lists—in the style typical of a *quaestio-responsio*—the questions he is going to deal with:

1. Whether it is licit for someone to change faiths, and if it should be permitted or not by Christians.
2. If it has already happened, and it has been determined that punishment is justified, what should be the penalty for the convert, and who should carry it out.
3. What should be the penalty for the instigator, should he be found guilty and therefore deserve punishment, and who should undertake it.
4. Should the Jewish community be considered responsible for accepting the girl among their members, and if so, who is entitled to punish the Jewish community, and which penalty should be imposed?
5. By virtue of which law should this conversion be punished and prohibited in the future, and how should Christians involved in the events be dealt with, specifically the Christian notary who was a witness and who did not stop the conversion, instead issuing the public records.²⁶

One of the most outstanding features of the *responsio* is that the longest part of the theological argument is addressed to the Jews, using previous legal opinions and arguments,²⁷ rather than to the Muslims, using themes taken from Christian-Muslim polemical discourse. Several reasons may account for this, including the direction of the conversion (from Islam to Judaism), as well as a scholastic tradition lacking interest in Islamic theology. In the text of the

²⁵ “Casus. Quedam mulier de genere sarracenorum in ritu sarracenico suggestione quidam viri iudei qui ea carnaliter comiscebatur, ritum iudaicum aut ut vulgarium verbis utamto iudeorum lege professus est, quam solemniter iudeorum congregacio vel synagoga per rabinos suos suscepit adhibetur testibus et notario christiano qui huius rei testimonium prohibere.” Alonso de Madrigal, *Responsio*, 86r.

²⁶ Madrigal, *Responsio*, 86r.

²⁷ As those of Oldradus da Ponte. Zacour, *Jews and Saracens*, Latin, 77; English translation, 42–43.

responsio, Islam is not praised, nor is it fully rejected, because it would have been inconsistent to reject it and then to ask the girl to return to her former faith.

Passing from one faith to another, a theme that is central to both manuscripts, is not just a result of the shift of “Christian theological imagination,” as Nirenberg²⁸ and Gómez-Moreno present it, or a change in the patterns of acceptance of the Jews due to the circumstances in Castile around the 1450s, bad as they were. The anti-converso riots in Toledo (1448–49) and related events would have made a threatening backdrop to any confrontation between the two religious minorities. Nor is it only a question of love and marriage across religions, that is, of laws prohibiting intermarriage.²⁹ What was at stake here was the maintenance of the agreements signed with minority religions, the role of the Church as protector of some of these communities, and the conception of the role of royal or civil jurisdiction as opposed to ecclesiastical intervention in the development of policies towards minorities.

Alonso de Madrigal states clearly that the Church only tolerates the Jewish and Muslim minorities, even though it considers their faiths to be evil, and any transaction between them must be considered unlawful. Some of his reasons refer to the nature of Judaism in itself. It is described by Madrigal as a sect rather than a religion (*religio*) or law (*lex*), because it has been abrogated by Christianity. Despite sharing with Christians part of their sacred texts, Jews will be entitled to no mercy if they die within the sect. They are damned, but the same is true of the Muslim woman, since Muslims will also be condemned. So, in theory, changing from one damnation to the other would not be a sin in itself, but doing so while rejecting Christianity as an option—especially when living in a Christian society with every inducement to make the “correct choice”—becomes a grave sin. Madrigal makes the following comparison: “going from the state of the Saracens to the state of Jews is like having one’s own sister as a concubine and, leaving her, taking as a concubine another dissolute woman not related by blood or affinity but tied to another man.”³⁰ The

28 Nirenberg, “Love Between Muslim,” 145.

29 The question of conversion superseded that of intermarriage or illicit sexual relations, which would have only applied to Christian-Muslim or Christian-Jewish relations, and not to those between the two minorities. See recent discussion in Simon Barton, *Conquerors, Brides and Concubines: Interfaith Relations and Social Power in Medieval Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 45–71.

30 “mulier transiendo de statum sarracenorum ad statum iudeorum sicut quis haberet sororem propria in concubinam prendere et relicta illa, accipet in concubina aliam mulierem solutam non consanguineam nisi afinem autem alicui aligatam.” Madrigal, *Responsio*, 88r. See further discussion of this first point in Nirenberg, “Love between Muslim,” 147–49.

Christian Church has an obligation to look after these misguided people, so that they do not commit new sins, so one must assume it should forbid these conversions—in any direction. Up to this point, Madrigal's argument follows some of the canonists' traditional views.³¹

But a new category that emerges from Alonso de Madrigal's reasoning is that of the "rite in which one is born" (*statu in quo natus est*).³² He finds a great difference between someone who remains in the state of Jewishness in which he was born and one who turns to it, the latter deserving punishment, the former not. The Christian Church chooses to tolerate both faiths while they last, each of them continuing to observe their own rite, because it is not an evil which the members of each faith enact, but one into which they are born.³³ Once this natural condition is broken by conversion to another condemned faith, while implicitly rejecting Christianity, punishment is deserved and must be imposed. A change of faith is brought about by proselytism, and that is forbidden for Jews in Christian lands. A number of practical reasons are given for this ban. Madrigal thinks that it may offend princes and other secular authorities to see how the Jewish community grows by means of proselytism. He adds that the conversion of a woman to Judaism should be considered blasphemous according to the Jews' own laws, since such a conversion would undermine the legitimacy of marriage and especially the tradition of matrilineality in Judaism. Thus conversion encourages Jews to give up observing their customs, by which their status is granted. The Church should see to it that they continue practicing the laws (*iura*) of their forefathers—lest they become innovators—as is their right by law, but also their obligation. Showing themselves too overtly, in defiance of the system of cohabitation that had been preserved until then, and of the laws that established their boundaries, would result in the revocation of their protected status.³⁴

Fortunately for the victim, the young woman who converted, the way in which the Muslim community presented both her plea and her gender worked in her favor, and she was found innocent.³⁵ In this, Madrigal is merely follow-

³¹ Zaccur, *Jews and Saracens*, *passim*.

³² "Patet ergo quanta differentia sit inter hoc quidem aliquem manere in statu iudaico in quo natus est vel transire ad illum, et immo unum est dignum penam, alterum non." Madrigal, *Responsio*, 88v.

³³ "Sicut per quolibet alio pacto manere autem sarracenos in suo ritu et iudeos in suo non punit ecclesia, quia licet mala sunt, non sunt mala que ipsi faciunt, sed mala in quis nascentur." Madrigal, *Responsio*, 88v.

³⁴ Madrigal, *Responsio*, 90r–91v.

³⁵ The conversion of a woman is less significant, according to Madrigal, *Responsio*, 109v.

ing his conviction, also applicable to Christians, that a woman's role within the family is always subordinated to that of the man, since she is not as wise and prudent, as he explains in his *De optima politia*.³⁶ She was not guilty because she had been deceived, *quia decepta fuit*; and because she was induced to take that step, she should not be punished.³⁷ No penalty should be imposed on her, since according to Christian law or the *Leyes de moros* there was no penalty for her actions, as she had been obliged to convert. But she should indeed be asked to return to her faith—again, the faith in which she was born—or else to accept conversion to the Christian faith.

The third part of the *responsio* focuses on the consequences of the conversion for the Jewish man who had been its instigator. The act had been proved illicit, but since the perpetrator was not a Christian, he had the right to be judged by his secular lord, as opposed to a religious one. The most appropriate penalty suggested is a fine, but since there is no treatment of this issue in any of the legal codes used by the participants in this trial, Madrigal suggests that it should be decided by the judge himself.³⁸

Penalties of fines, physical violence, or exile were reserved for the instigator and the Jewish community for having cooperated and accepted the conversion. It was long established that the Jews could not erect new synagogues and, likewise, they should not be allowed to convert any member of the other faiths to their own. As they had supported this affair and had taken the Muslim convert in, they were liable to be punished. But since no male had been circumcised³⁹ nor was there an established penalty, it would fall to the archbishop to decide which of these three punishments would be most appropriate. Madrigal raises

³⁶ Madrigal, *De optima politia*, 2r–v, in Emiliano Fernández Vallina, “Poder y buen gobierno en Alfonso de Madrigal el Tostado,” *Cuadernos salmantinos de filosofía* 23 (1996): 255–74, here at 265.

³⁷ “Fuisse inducta tanquam femina et fragilitas sexum non licet plenum consilium sed inestabile [...] ergo exposant eam nullam penam hic sustinere.” Madrigal, *Responsio*, 109r.

³⁸ Despite his efforts, and given that the lord of Talavera was at that time the archbishop of Toledo, the decision about this case fell to the clergymen, who were deeply influenced by polemics. Madrigal, *Responsio*, 109v.

³⁹ In which case, there would have been other reprisals, because circumcision was considered castration in Roman law, as seen in the *Codex Theodosianus*. Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1987), 176; Micha Perry, “Byzantium’s Role in the Transmission of Jewish Knowledge in the Middle Ages: The Attitude toward Circumcision,” in *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. Guy Stroumsa et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 643–57, here at 647–48. Madrigal, *Responsio*, 110v, elaborates on the punishment circumcision would have involved.

the objection that both physical punishment—beating—and exile were penalties difficult to impose on an entire community. Therefore, again, we find that fines are considered the most suitable punishment and probably the best compromise.⁴⁰

Madrigal's final argument dealt with the notary who had witnessed the conversion. Such behavior was considered unworthy of a good Christian, but its public consequences were also feared. Therefore, in order to discourage Christian sanction of these kinds of acts, the presence of Christian notaries at ceremonies of other rites had to be forbidden. As this particular case had been considered unlawful, again, the notary had to suffer the penalties ordered by the archbishop, since no legal precedent existed.⁴¹

As I have mentioned before, and as Nirenberg correctly stated,⁴² Madrigal's work is not properly a dispute, or a polemical treatise of any sort—he was not that kind of scholar, as the rest of his work demonstrates. The idea of social peace achieved by means of communication and the negotiation of laws was crucial in Madrigal's work.⁴³ But social peace was also fostered by domestic peace, so the Talavera case challenged the very foundations of his model for political management.⁴⁴ While the Christian magistrates and attorneys at the Talavera trial wrote about the same subjects as Alonso de Madrigal, the messianic arguments that Gómez Moreno studied in their letters are absent from the scholar's *responsio*. Madrigal's aim was to maintain social order and to uphold the religious *status quo*, and thus he insisted on the question of a person's original faith. He is concerned as much about the religious situation of the convert, as he is about the claims that the different minorities had on their lord, the archbishop, and was thus attempting to avert riots against the Jews at the time of the Statute of Pedro Sarmiento in Toledo, but also hoping to prevent further confrontation between the Jewish and Muslim *aljamas* of a city as small as Talavera.⁴⁵ Both were protected by the archbishop and the canons

⁴⁰ Madrigal, *Responsio*, 110r.

⁴¹ Madrigal, *Responsio*, 111r–v.

⁴² Nirenberg, “Love between Muslim,” 146.

⁴³ Madrigal, *De optima politia*, ed. Bellosio, Latin, 129, Spanish, 75.

⁴⁴ As he states in the fifth conclusion on the number of wives. Madrigal, *De optima politia*, ed. Bellosio, Latin, 156–61; Spanish, 112–21.

⁴⁵ Work on these riots has been continuous in the past years. For an updated bibliography, see Linda Martz, *A Network of Converso Families in Early Modern Toledo: Assimilating a Minority* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 1–80; and Rosa Vidal Doval, “*Nos soli sumus christiani*. *Conversos* in the Texts of the Toledo Rebellion of 1449,” in *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Memory of Alan Deyermond*, ed. Andrew M. Beresford, Louise M. Haywood and Julian Weiss (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013), 215–36.

of Saint Mary, the Hieronymite prior of Saint Catherine, and both were represented by local Christian lawyers, the same lawyers—in this case the local (maybe Apostolic) notary—who had dared witness the girl's conversion. This was another transgression that needed to be corrected.

Going back to what the Muslim claimants were demanding when they brought this suit, it should be remembered that Muslims in Talavera were allowed to apply their own law to their coreligionists. Once the archbishop, as their jurisdictional lord, had been declared the lawful head of the court of appeals by Madrigal's opinion and had heard the arguments of all the parties, his decision must have taken into account the legal framework of Islamic jurisprudence. So, returning to the excerpts given above from the *Leyes de los moros*, the woman, who was considered not responsible for her actions, was supposed to return to her faith in repentance, or else be killed. Interestingly, Madrigal suggested precisely the same solution: to render the conversion invalid, to return "to the faith in which one was born." He might have consulted Farax al-Çadafe on his community's views on such point. Contrary to the position of the Christian attorneys during the trial, who suggested banning the convert woman from both communities, Madrigal's recommendation assured vigilance from her relatives and *aljama*, gave her a means of support—thus avoiding the threat of prostitution—and constituted a restitution of the *status quo* for the two *aljamas*. Had she not returned to her former faith, execution would have applied, according to the *Leyes de moros*, but the sentence still had to be enforced by Christian authorities, given the status of Muslim jurisdiction at the time.⁴⁶ The Muslim girl in fact returned to her faith of origin, as was stated at the meeting of the Talavera town council (*ayuntamiento*) in 1451, which gives a date to the actual trial—unknown until now—and provides a context for the writings of the two scholars.

"Los dichos señores mandaron escriuir una carta para el señor arçobispo sobre la mora que se torno judia e despues mora, la qual dieron en forma."⁴⁷ The archbishop seems to have wisely followed an opinion that would bring peace and prevent future conversions. In doing so, he created a legal precedent that was widely observed among Castilian bishops in the following years, as copies of the trial were disseminated.

After this trial, Alonso de Madrigal was rewarded with—or considered the most suitable candidate for—the see of Ávila, the city with the largest Muslim

⁴⁶ Ana Echevarría, "Las aljamas mudéjares castellanas en el siglo xv. Redes de poder y conflictos internos," *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Sección III—Historia Medieval* 14 (2001): 93–121.

⁴⁷ Dated on 3 December 1451. Archivo Municipal de Talavera, Acuerdos (1450–59), 76r. Moreno, Mudéjares de Talavera, 107–110.

aljama of the Duero region.⁴⁸ He was appointed bishop of Ávila in 1454, where he remained until his death. Unfortunately, it is difficult to know from the available sources whether Yuda and the Jewish *aljama* were obliged to pay fines or subjected to corporal punishment for their crime. With luck, more research in the archives of Toledo and Talavera will bring forth new details of this extraordinary case.

The word “cohabitation,” which Joseph Pérez has borrowed from the French language and which Ángel Gómez-Moreno quoted in relation to this case, is not in fact one used by historians today. Madrigal chose the late Latin version of this same term, *cohabitione*, to refer to the system in which Jews lived side by side with Christians and Muslims.⁴⁹ Here we have, then, the idea of coexistence explained by a contemporary. The trial of the Muslim woman in Talavera proves that as late as the mid-fifteenth century, this system of privileged statuses was still considered valid by the three communities, even after the upheavals connected to the *converso* revolt in Toledo. The doubts expressed by Archbishop Alonso Carrillo about his suitability for judging a case between Jews and Muslims would never have arisen if the episode had taken place a couple of decades later. And the opportunity given to the Muslim girl to return to her faith “of nature” would have been unthinkable after the creation of the Inquisition.

48 Ana Echevarría, *The City of the Three Mosques: Ávila and its Muslims in the Middle Ages* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2011).

49 Madrigal, *Responsio*, 9ov.

CHAPTER 4

The Spirit of the Letter: The Hebrew Inscription in Bermejo's *Piedat* Revisited

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Abstract

The Hebrew inscription in the *Piedat* attributed to Bartolomé Bermejo is usually viewed in relation to the possible involvement of conversos in the painting. Offering a broader exploration of the local setting as well as the visual and textual models available to Bermejo, this article goes beyond a narrow converso interpretation and situates the inscription within two different contexts: an environment of growing Christian interest in Hebraic knowledge and an Aragonese artistic experimentation with the iconography of the Man of Sorrows.

Keywords

Bartolomé Bermejo – Conversos – Hebrew letters in Christian art – man of sorrows – Christian hebraism – inscriptions and pseudo-inscriptions – inter-religious relations

Hebrew held an ambivalent position for Christians in the pre-modern world. As the language of Jews and Judaism, it signified the theological Other and the

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superseded past. More than a mere sign of despised identity, the particular relationship Jews had with the Hebrew text, their way of making sense of the letters, was, for Christians, their source of error in understanding God's message. The Church Fathers regularly contrasted Jewish "carnal" reading of Scripture with Christianity's willingness to go beyond the literal sense of the sacred text to its spiritual meaning. This hermeneutical "error" had grave consequences. Obsessed with the letter, the Jews missed the message of Christ, remained bound to the Old Law, and were left outside salvation. As Paul famously wrote, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

Yet Hebrew was also the language of creation and of Adam, the universal language before the Tower of Babel, and, perhaps most importantly of all, the medium through which the Scripture was revealed. Epitomized in Jerome's notion of *Hebraica veritas*, Hebrew and the Hebrew biblical text were held by Christians to possess some of the most profound truths of the faith. An attachment to the letters may have blinded the Jews from seeing the truth, but it was those very letters that communicated the truth in the first place.

The phenomenon of Hebrew letters in Christian art is an interesting case in point of this charged, dual connotation. The appearance of Hebrew letters in Christian works of art can be explained as a device to represent either a rejected Otherness or alternatively a desired heritage to be appropriated through pictorial means. Moreover, the use of Hebrew in these images could serve as a tool to make polemical claims. Yet scholars have generally not been sensitive enough to the complexity of the issue. Since alphabets and scripts often function as cultural markers, the logic of identity seems to govern the way we have accounted for these images. In particular, the search for the "Jewish connection" to explain the use of the Hebrew language was and is quite common.¹ Scholarship of late medieval Spain is no exception to this broad tendency, as the search for Jewish traces is still characteristic of many studies of its cultural and religious history. This logic of identity, I argue, obscures our vision. An exploration of the complexity of Hebrew letters in Christian art can shed light on the way Spaniards in the late Middle Ages grappled with Hebrew and, in consequence, articulated the relationships between Christianity and Judaism.

¹ A well-known and much-studied case is the appearance of Hebrew letters in Rembrandt's work. See Mirjam Alexander-Knotter, "An Ingenious Device: Rembrandt's Use of Hebrew Inscriptions," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 33.2 (1999): 131–59; Shalom Sabar, "Between Calvinists and Jews: Hebrew Script in Rembrandt's Art," in *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture*, ed. Mitchell B. Merback (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 371–404.

Loperuelo's Piedat

Sometime before 1474, the master painter Bartolomé de Cárdenas, also known as “el Bermejo,” (ca. 1440–ca. 1500) produced an unusual painting referred to as “*Piedat*” (Fig. 4.1).² The painting, now in the Mateu Collection at the Museu del Castell de Peralada in Girona (Catalonia), is a medium-size oil painting (94.8 × 61.9 cm.) on a cherry wood panel. At the center of the painting stands a suffering, bleeding Christ, supported by two weeping angels wearing vestments and standing next to his tomb. The two angels are touching Christ through an exceptionally long, transparent cloth, which covers his loins. Blood is flowing from the wound in Chris’s side towards his thighs, leading the spectator’s gaze to his genitalia, partially visible through the cloth. Christ’s right hand is touching his right ribs, his fingers drawing attention to his wound in what is known as the *ostentatio vulnerum*. He wears a resplendent crown in the shape of a cross, in addition to a crown of thorns. The scene is depicted inside an indoor sepulcher, located in a gray marble room. A hint of landscape is visible through the door, though its details are vague. Christ is standing outside the red marble tomb, his feet on tiles with cryptic Latin letters that do not form meaningful words, a point to which we will return later. In front of the tiles stands conspicuously a sumptuous golden chalice, decorated with precious stones. A drop of blood lies next to the chalice. Finally, a legible Hebrew inscription is displayed on the side of Christ’s open tomb. It is to this inscription and to the wider questions it raises that this essay will be devoted.

The inscription (Fig. 4.2) can be translated as “I [or he] repaired / life / with [or as] my death / death / was annihilated” (*החיים / תקן / במוֹתִי כֶּלֶה / המיתה*). It is by no means perfectly written Hebrew, as the second word is partially concealed and the phrase contains some scribal peculiarities. Specifically, the word “Ha-haim” (*החיים*) is divided into two parts between the letters Het (ח) and Yod (י). In addition, the letter Mēm (מ) in the word “Hamita” (*המיתה*) is tilted sideways. Nevertheless, the inscription is legible and clear. It occupies a prominent place

² The detailed description of the painting is based on the work of Judith Berg-Sobré, see her “Bartolomé de Cárdenas, the Piedat of Johan de Loperuelo, and Painting at Daroca (Aragon),” *The Art Bulletin* 59.4 (1977), 494–500; Berg-Sobré, *Bartolomé de Cárdenas “El Bermejo:” Itinerant Painter in the Crown of Aragon* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1998), 49–92, esp. 70–77. See also Jaime Barrachina Navarro, “Bartolomé Bermejo. Cristo de Piedad,” in *La pintura gótica hispanoflamenca: Bartolomé Bermejo y su época: [exposición]* Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, Barcelona 26 de Febrero, Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao 9 de Junio–31 de Agosto de 2003, ed. Francesc Ruiz i Quesada (Barcelona; Bilbao: Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya; Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, 2003), 142–47, with further bibliography.



FIGURE 4.1 *Bartolomé Bermejo, "Piedat"*, before 1474, Mateu collection, Museu de Castell de Peralada (Girona).

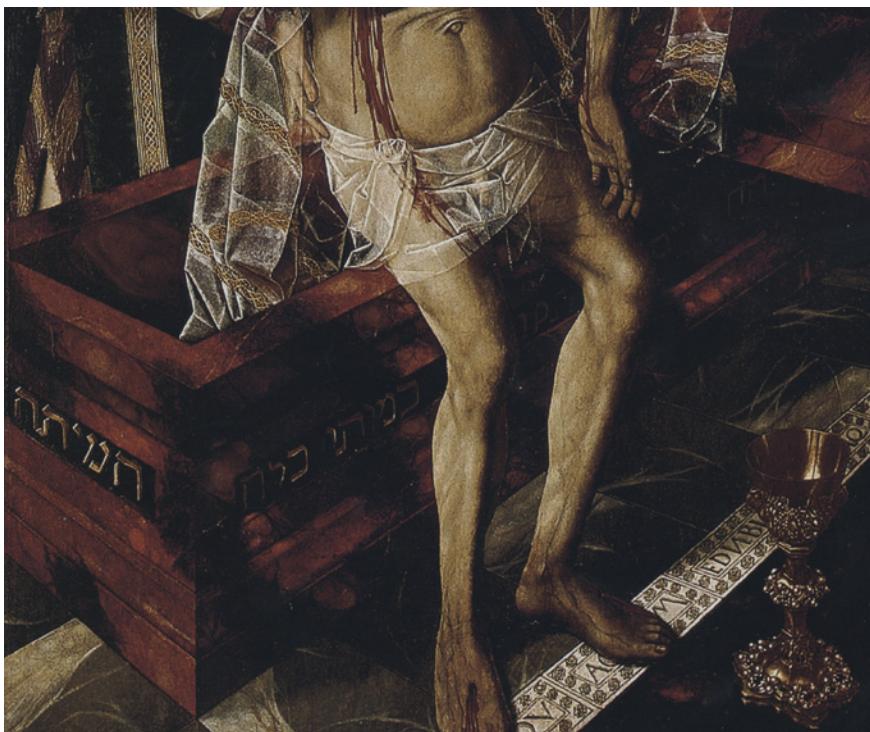


FIGURE 4.2 *Bermejo, "Piedat"*, detail.

in the painting and was without a doubt meant to be seen. What is more, the text is meaningful and the reference to the image of the bleeding, soon to be buried and ultimately resurrected Christ, could not be mistaken. But why this Christological message is rendered in Hebrew, and what it could have meant in late fifteenth-century Spain, are questions yet to be answered.

This unusual—in fact, unparalleled—inscription has caught the attention of scholars in various fields. Surveys of the phenomenon of Hebrew inscriptions in Western art, largely dedicated to Northern and Italian art, mention it in passing without offering a detailed discussion.³ A more sustained treatment is

³ An important exception is Harris Lenowitz, “Hebrew Script in the Works of Bartolomé Bermejo,” *Ars Judaica* 4 (2008): 7–20; Lenowitz, “On Three Early Incidences of Hebrew Script in Western Art,” in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber*, ed. Steven Leonard Jacobs (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009), 441–54. Lenowitz, however, focuses on linguistic analysis and does not explore the *Piedat*'s local setting and the wider significance of Hebrew letters in late fifteenth-century Spanish culture.

provided by students of Bermejo's oeuvre. These scholars have routinely grappled with the Hebrew letters in the *Piedat*, with the results being diverse and at times partial. Until recently, these scholars failed to situate the production of the *Piedat* within a possible converso milieu in late fifteenth-century Daroca (Aragón). Yet even among those who have identified this milieu, the deliberate choice of inscribing Hebrew letters on Christ's sepulcher has not received sufficient attention. It seems that pointing to the involvement of conversos closed the discussion rather than opening the field to further questions. Here, it seems to me, the implicit assumption was that if and when these conversos make use of Hebrew letters in paintings, they do so because it is meaningful for them *as conversos*, that is, as Christians of Jewish descent. There are reasons to approach this conclusion with some caution.

In what follows, I argue that the possible converso background is only one, relatively minor part of the story. Through a discussion of the visual and textual models employed by Bermejo, as well as their theological implications, I will problematize the attempts to use a possible converso background as universal grounds for interpretation. Ultimately, I will suggest that a wider fascination with Hebrew among Christian learned circles, together with a specifically Aragonese artistic experimentation with the iconography of the Man of Sorrows, better helps to account for this image. Conversos were perhaps involved in the making of the image, but this painting reflects broader cultural trends in late fifteenth-century Spain.

Bermejo's image leaves us with more question than answers. The provenance of the work is unknown. The painting is not signed or dated. Moreover, there are no directly related documents, such as a contract or a contemporary description, that would shed light on these questions. We are therefore left with documents that are only indirectly related, and the evidence of the image itself. There is nonetheless a consensus in attributing this painting to Bermejo. Early twentieth-century scholars have associated this work with Bermejo's activity in Valencia, based on the stylistic features of the painting.⁴ Arguing against this view in an article dedicated to the problem, and later in her monograph on Bermejo, Judith Berg-Sobré has sought to link this painting with Bermejo's activity in the Aragonese town of Daroca. Since her argument raises important issues concerning the painter, the patron, and the Darocan context, it will be worthwhile to revisit it here.

Berg-Sobré identifies the image with a *Piedat* that Bermejo painted for a wealthy Darocan merchant named Juan (or Johan) de Loperuelo. In 1474, the Santo Domingo de Silos parish church of Daroca hired Bermejo to paint an

⁴ Berg-Sobré, *Piedat*, 495, n. 4.

altarpiece (*retablo*) dedicated to its patron saint (a panel of which is now in the Museo del Prado). The contract involves the vicar of Santo Domingo as well as the arch-presbyter of Zaragoza and the canon of the Santa María de los Corporales Collegiate Church in Daroca. While discussing the details of the altarpiece of Santo Domingo, the contract refers to Bermejo and Loperuelo's preexisting working relationship:

The abovementioned altarpiece is to be of the width of sixteen hand spans (*palmos*) and the height of twenty and eight spans of the hand of Johan de Loperuelo ... Item, it is a condition that the said work be done in oil, in fine colors and in blue, similar to the piece of the *piedat* of Johan de Loperuelo; and thus it is to be worked to perfection, both in colors as well as in faces and flesh parts, similar to or better than the aforesaid piece of the *piedat* of Johan de Loperuelo, and is to be finished by the hand of the aforesaid master Bartolome Bermeio.⁵

It appears, then, that an earlier work commissioned by Loperuelo and produced by Bermejo served as the model for the Santo Domingo altarpiece. Loperuelo's own physical measurements serve as a standard of quality and reliability for the future work discussed in the contract. It is also plausible to assume that Loperuelo, who appears in the Santo Domingo contract as one of the deputies of the Santo Domingo parish church, served as an intermediary between Bermejo and the parish church and thus played a major role in the artist's activity in Daroca.

Bermejo failed to fulfill the terms of the contract and, after some negotiation, a second contract was drawn up in 1477.⁶ At that time, Bermejo is referred to as a citizen of Zaragoza, meaning that the period of his residency in Daroca was relatively short. Loperuelo appears in the second contract too. Once again, the contract mentions as the model for the altarpiece of Santo Domingo a piece made by Bermejo and commissioned by Loperuelo. This

5 "... el sobredito retaulo ha de seyer de amplaria de setze palmos, e de altaria de vint e ocho palmos de los de la mano de Johan de Loperuelo ... Item es condicion que la dita obra sia obrada al olio, de colores finos et de adzur, semejant a de la pieça de la Piadat de Johan de Loperuelo; at assin mesmo ha de seyer acabado en perfeccion de obra, assi de colores de testas et de encarnaciones, semejant o mejor de la dicha pieça de la Piadat de Johan de Loperuelo, et ha de seyer acabado de la mano del dito mestre Bartholome Bermeio." The document was first published by Manuel Serrano y Sanz, "Documentos relativos a la pintura en Aragón durante los siglos XIV y XV (continuación)," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 34 (1916): 462–92, here at 483.

6 Manuel Serrano y Sanz, "Documentos relativos a la pintura," 457.

time the contract refers to a work in the San Francisco monastery in Daroca. Although the identity of the particular work mentioned in the second contract is still debated, some have suggested that it was the altarpiece of Santa Engracia (Fig. 4.3).⁷ It is clear from the narrative theme depicted in these panels, however, that the *Piedat* could not have been connected to them.

The identification of the elusive *Piedat* with the painting now in the Mateu Collection is based on stylistic and iconographical analysis. In particular, Berg-Sobré links it to what she describes as the wider late medieval Aragonese tradition of *Piedat* paintings. This tradition is not to be mistaken with the better-known *Pietà*, which depicts the dead Christ on the Virgin's lap, an example of which was painted by Bermejo in 1490 for the private chapel of the Barcelonese canon Lluís Desplà i Oms and is now in the Cathedral of Barcelona. In contrast, the Aragonese *Piedat* paintings depicted the image of the dead Christ in his tomb, sometimes accompanied by supporting angels or the mourning Mary and St. John the Evangelist. These images were usually placed at the bottom center of the *banco* of the main altarpiece (*retablo mayor*). As such, they were meant to be seen by the crowd arriving for the Mass or praying in front of the altar. In high altarpieces, a *Piedat* image was sometimes painted on a polygonal tabernacle set into the center of the *banco*. This type of tabernacle, referred to also as *custodia*, usually contained consecrated reserve hosts.⁸ The liturgical context of these images and their relation to the Eucharist is therefore evident.

Although Aragonese *Piedat* paintings were most often used in large altarpieces, the size of Bermejo's painting makes it too big to have been on the central panel of the custodial. Instead, it was more likely intended for private devotion.⁹ We are not entirely sure whether it belonged to a minor altarpiece together with other panels or was an independent panel. Nor can we be certain

⁷ Berg-Sobré, *Piedat*, 496.

⁸ For an extended discussion of the altarpiece tradition in late medieval Aragon, see Judith Berg-Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350–1500* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989). This specific Aragonese tradition should be seen as a local variation of the wider European iconographic tradition of the Man of Sorrows (*varón de dolores*, *Schmerzensmann*), defined by Erwin Panofsky in an influential essay, see his “Imago Pietatis. Contribution à l'histoire des types du ‘Christ de Pitié’, ‘Homme de Douleurs’ et de la ‘Maria Mediatrix’,” in *Peinture et dévotion en Europe du Nord à la fin du Moyen Âge*, trans. Daniela Becker (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), 13–28 [originally published as “Imago Pietatis: Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des ‘Schmerzenmanns’ und der ‘Maria Mediatrix’,” in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1927), 261–308].

⁹ Berg-Sobré, *Piedat*, 496.



FIGURE 4.3 *Bermejo, "The Arrest of Santa Engracia," 1474–1477, San Diego Museum of Art.*

with regard to where it was placed.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the relationship of this image to Daroca and to the patronage of Loperuelo is well established. It is equally clear that we are dealing here with an image made for a small public, most probably Loperuelo and his close circle.

The Source of the Hebrew Inscription and the Problem of Identification

The exceptional detail of the Hebrew inscription poses no less of a conundrum. Scholars differ on how to read the Hebrew inscription in Bermejo's *Piedat*, and even more so on how to explain it.¹¹ Here, however, there are not only problems of connoisseurship and epigraphical analysis. Wider questions about the relations of this iconographic detail to the social milieu of the

¹⁰ Fernando Marías suggested that this *Piedat* should be linked with the piece made by Bermejo for Loperuelo and the San Francisco monastery, a site located in Daroca and destroyed in 1838. There, according to this author, it was placed in a funerary chapel for Loperuelo's father together with other panels now in the Institut Amatller d'Art Hispànic de Barcelona and the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. The most recent and complete version of this argument can be found in Fernando Marías, "Bartolomé Bermejo en Daroca: de pintores, conversos y tablas" *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 214.1 (2017), 105–130. There are good reasons to agree with Marías. In addition to their resemblance in style, all these paintings emphasize salvation through Christ and the role of angels. However, unlike the rest of the panels, the *Piedat* is painted on cherry wood panel (See Berg-Sobré, *El Bermejo*, 71, esp. n. 36). In addition, the Santo Domingo contract mentions a piece (*pieça*), not a multi-panel altarpiece. Moreover, the reference to the funerary chapel of Loperuelo's father mentions only a coat of arms (*escudos y armas*), not a *Piedat*. See Javier García Marco, Miguel Ángel Motis Dolader and María Luz Rodrigo Estevan, *Procesos inquisitoriales de Daroca y su comunidad. Estudios preliminares, edición e índices* (Daroca: Centro de estudios Darocenses, 1994), 408. It seems safe to presume that the *Piedat* was originally meant to be an independent devotional piece destined to private use, and perhaps later, if at all, was supplemented by the other panels.

¹¹ Berg-Sobré has read the inscription as "you will hope for life in my death, you have commended perfection." See her *Behind the Altar*, 17; Fernando Marías has suggested it be read as "You will wait [for] life and in my death you will celebrate perfection" and as "through his death He triumphed death itself." See Marías, "El problema de los artistas conversos en el Siglo de Oro," in *Temas y formas hispánicas. Arte, cultura y sociedad*, ed. Carlos Mata Induráin and Anna Morózova (Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2015), 241–62, esp. 249, n. 26. Harris Lenowitz offers "he repaired life, in his death he terminated death" in his "Hebrew Script," 13. Although this is still a speculation, as the word "repaired" can only be guessed due to the missing letters, I concur with Lenowitz's reading and see this reading as the most plausible.

painter and the patron form a major part of the discussion. I will address these issues at length, but before that it is essential to discuss the text of the inscription itself. Written in late medieval Sephardi script, which bears resemblance to the Hebrew inscriptions in the synagogue in Cordoba—most probably Bermejo's hometown¹²—it communicates a Christological message through an almost perfect Hebrew phrase. To my knowledge, there is no Hebrew text, biblical or otherwise, that Bermejo or the individuals involved in this painting could have used as a source for the phrase “He repaired life / with my death, death was annihilated.” In contrast, the inscription echoes Christian sources. Francesc Ruiz i Quesada suggested a relationship between the content of the *Piedat* inscription and two Pauline verses. The first is: “But it is now made manifest by the illumination of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath destroyed death and hath brought to light life and incorruption by the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10). The second, and more telling according to this author, is: “Therefore because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner hath been partaker of the same: that, through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).¹³ We can identify further Christian sources, Pauline and otherwise, that bear resemblance to the *Piedat* inscription. There is a similar focus on Christ’s triumph over death in Paul’s discussion of resurrection and faith in 1 Corinthians 15 and in his discussion of the meaning of Christ’s death in Romans 5–6. Even more striking is Augustine’s commentary on John 3:6–21, which uses an almost identical theological vocabulary:

Is not Christ life? And yet Christ died. But in Christ’s death, death [itself] was dead. Because the death of life killed death, the fullness of life abolished death; death was absorbed in Christ’s body.¹⁴

Bermejo’s Hebrew inscription conveys the same ideas and uses a vocabulary similar to these Pauline and Augustinian references. The resemblance cannot

¹² Fernando Marías, “Bartolomé Bermejo ¿Cordubensis?” *Ars Longa* 21 (2012): 135–42.

¹³ Francesc Ruiz i Quesada, “La incidencia de las fuentes escritas en la iconografía del retablo de Santo Domingo de Silos, de Bartolomé Bermejo,” *RACBASJ: Butlletí* 23–24 (2009–10): 33–53, here at 52, n. 33.

¹⁴ Augustine, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*, 12: 11, ed. Radbod Willem [Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 36] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990 [1954]), 127: “Nonne uita Christus? et tamen mortuus Christus. Sed in morte Christi mors mortua est; quia uita mortua occidit mortem, plenitudo uitae deglutit mortem; absorpta est mors in Christi corpore.”

be coincidental, yet we are not dealing here with an exact quote by any means. Moreover, even if we do take this resemblance as indicative, we still remain with the crucial question: whence the Hebrew? It should be noted that translations of the entire New Testament (not to mention Augustine) to Hebrew are a rather late phenomenon. In the two main genres of pre-modern literature in which one could find translations of New Testament verses into Hebrew, the Jewish anti-Christian polemics and the Christian anti-Jewish polemics, the verses corresponding to the *Piedat* inscription are not to be found.¹⁵

Admittedly, the possibility that a textual source for this inscription existed and circulated in fifteenth century Aragon but is now lost cannot be rejected. Yet it is highly plausible that we are dealing here with an ad-hoc creative translation, or even more precisely, with a Hebrew paraphrase devised specifically for this painting. The ideas and the vocabulary about Christ's life-giving death are evidently taken from the Christian repertoire, yet the idiosyncrasy and singularity of the Hebrew sentence suggests that its meaningfulness stands on its own.

This raises two interdependent questions. The first is who was responsible for the making of the Hebrew inscription and the second is why they chose to do so. The existing attempts to address these questions are characterized by a certain "logic of identity," that is, an interpretation of the pictorial-textual-theological phenomenon of the Hebrew inscription as a by-product of the identity of the painter or patron. In particular, the Hebrew inscription was associated by scholars with the painter's possible converso background since the

¹⁵ Complete translations of the Pauline epistles are not known in this period, yet in several important Jewish polemical works from late medieval Spain one can find translated verses from throughout the Pauline corpus. The most relevant cases for Aragon is Profiat Duran, *The Polemical Writings of Profiat Duran: The 'Reproach of the Gentiles' and 'Be Not Like unto Thy Fathers'* [in Hebrew], ed. Frank Talmage (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center and Dinur Center, 1981). For Hebrew translations of the Gospels of Matthew for polemical purposes, see now Christoph Ochs, *Matthaeus Adversus Christianos: The Use of the Gospel of Matthew in Jewish Polemics Against the Divinity of Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), esp. chaps. 6 and 7 which deal with Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut and Profiat Duran. See also Harvey J. Hames, "Translated from Catalan: Looking at a Fifteenth Century Hebrew Version of the Gospels," in *El saber i les llengües vernacles a l'època de Llull i Eiximenis. Estudis ICREA sobre vernacularització*, ed. Anna Alberni et al. (Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat, 2012), 285–302. For the case of translation into Hebrew in Christian anti-Jewish literature, see Ryan Szpiech, "The Aura of an Alphabet: Interpreting the Hebrew Gospels in Ramon Martí's *Dagger of Faith* (1278)," *Numerus* 61 (2014): 334–63.

early days of modern Spanish art history.¹⁶ The link scholars made to conversos in this context should be understood as more than a mere biographical detail. For these scholars it has its own explanatory power. Conversos are usually viewed by historians as clandestine guardians of Jewish practices and beliefs, or as people who hold syncretic, unusual customs and views. Identifying the milieu in which this image was made as converso would therefore ostensibly explain why Hebrew is inscribed in a Christian-themed painting.¹⁷

Until recently, the converso connection was more a common hypothesis among Bermejo scholars than an accepted fact. Those rejecting this hypothesis claimed that there is no direct evidence about a converso identity of Bermejo or Loperuelo. Moreover, the fact that the Hebrew in the *Piedat* is imperfect and that in other paintings by Bermejo there are only pseudo-Hebrew inscriptions, was understood to be a further indication that Bermejo could not have been from converso stock but was a devout Christian, as evidenced in the theme of the painting. For these scholars, the use of legible, Christological Hebrew in the *Piedat* did not merit a particular explanation.¹⁸ However, the claim that there is a lack of documentary evidence pointing to a converso background is simply incorrect. A variety of archival documents illuminate the Darocan context in which Bermejo worked. It appears that Bermejo's relationship to Daroca was not limited to his artistic work. In a notarial document from 1481, Bermejo gives

16 To the best of my knowledge, the first scholar to suggest this was Elías Tormo, see his "Bartolomé Bermejo, el más recio de los primitivos españoles. Resumen de su vida, de su obra y de su estudio," *Archivo español de Arte y Arqueología* 2, nos. 4–5 (1926): 11–96, esp. 32.

17 The problems with explanations that account for unique texts, images, personalities, religious practices, and so forth by tracing the converso link are well known. See on this issue the insightful remarks of David Nirenberg in his "Figures of Thought and Figures of Flesh: 'Jews' and 'Judaism' in Late-Medieval Spanish Poetry and Politics," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 398–426, esp. 401. For a more general critique of the analytical usefulness of the concept of identity, see Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond Identity," *Theory and Society* 29.1 (2000): 1–47.

18 Berg-Sobré, *El Bermejo*, 77. See also the detailed discussion in Lenowitz, "Hebrew Script." This author offers an interesting and convincing discussion of the symbolic meaning of the pseudo-Hebrew in Bermejo's *Dormition of the Virgin* (1468–76, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) and less extensive discussions of the *Piedat* (with no reference to the converso context or to the meaning of the inscription) and the *Resurrection* (ca. 1475, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya). His overall argument—that the existence of Hebrew script in the works of Bermejo was some sort of "fantasma," a haunted memory of Jewish presence in Spain just before the Catholic Monarchs demanded loyalty and "hatred of all things Jewish"—is unsatisfactory.

power of attorney to his wife, Grazia de Palaciano, a citizen of Daroca.¹⁹ From this document we learn that Bermejo and his wife possessed some landed property in the town and that they raised together a son Palaciano had from a previous marriage. Although Bermejo lived in Daroca less than ten years, he was evidently connected to that town through bonds of family and property. The figure of Palaciano merits some further attention. Evidence suggests that Palaciano was the daughter of an important member of Daroca's town council.²⁰ Interestingly, in several proceedings of the tribunal of the Inquisition in Zaragoza, Bermejo's wife is referred to as *penitenciada*, meaning a person who was convicted by the Inquisition and reconciled.²¹ We do not have her trial record, but we do know she was referred to as *Judaizante* in other inquisitorial interrogations. There are good reasons to suspect that she was hailing from a converso family.²²

Returning to Bermejo himself, it may be interesting to consider one of the terms of the first Santo Domingo contract, suggesting that if the painter would fail to produce the work he would be excommunicated. Berg-Sobré takes this threat as another piece of evidence for Bermejo's Catholic identity, arguing that the threat of excommunication would have no effect on a Jew. This, however, fails to take into consideration that this threat would have been effective for all members of the Christian community, regardless of whether they were Old or New Christians. There is no reason, therefore, to exclude the possibility that Bermejo was a converso.²³

While Bermejo's biography is rather obscure, archival evidence proves that Loperuelo was thought to be of converso stock by his contemporaries. This wealthy merchant stood at the center of an inquisitorial inquiry held between 1486 and 1496 whose files are now located at the Archivo histórico provincial

¹⁹ A transcript of the document is given by Berg-Sobré, *El Bermejo*, 291–93.

²⁰ María Luz Rodrigo Esteven, *La ciudad de Daroca a fines de la Edad Media. Selección documental (1328–1526)* (Daroca: Centro de Estudios Darocenses, 1999), docs. 14, 64, 69, 154, 155, 156, 296, 297.

²¹ García Marco et al., *Procesos*, 31, 114.

²² This is Marías's claim in his "Bermejo en Daroca." In one of the inquisitorial proceedings there are allegations against Palaciano's Jewish practices, such as keeping the Shabbat and some dietary laws. See García Marco et al., *Procesos*, 31.

²³ Marías strongly suggests that Bermejo was of converso origin, and brings up in this context the association of the color russet, the meaning of the Spanish word *bermejo*, with Jews in Medieval Spain. See *idem*, "Bermejo en Daroca." More generally on Jews and red hair, see Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 1: 145–60.

of Zaragoza.²⁴ Loperuelo's inquisitorial file is interesting for its content as well as for its material form. Two paper fragments with Hebrew letters are sewed to the original file. They appear to be fragments from the Babylonian Talmud, tractates *Megillah* 9b (cover) and *Horayot* 12a-b (back). Since there is not a single reference to them—nor to any other Hebrew text—in the interrogation itself, I therefore conclude that they pertain to the wider European phenomenon of Hebrew books “recycled” as book or *dossier* binders.²⁵

The interrogation itself is rich though not exceptional. The main charge against this affluent patron was Judaizing. “Heretical” texts or beliefs do not form a major part of the evidentiary corpus the Inquisition had compiled for the trial, but ritual practices certainly do. Throughout the interrogation, the Inquisition summoned witnesses who testified on Loperuelo's habits in Sabbath and holidays, the extent to which he visited the synagogue, and his dietary customs. Two recurring allegations were that Loperuelo, when closing a deal, used to swear on the ten commandments and that after the death of his father, Bartolomé de Loperuelo, Juan and his family followed “Jewish” mourning practices.

The information gleaned from the inquisitorial file, as well as from numerous other archival documents found at the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid, presents the Loperuelos as a prominent family in Daroca. It is clear that Juan de Loperuelo's father was a citizen (*vecino*) and an influential merchant in Daroca who, beginning in 1451, held various official positions.²⁶ We also know that Loperuelo's brother, Mateu de Loperuelo, was a presbyter in

²⁴ Archivo Histórico Provincial de Zaragoza, sección Inquisición, leg. 21:7 (1496–97). The proceeding was published in García Marco et al., *Procesos*, 385–419.

²⁵ See Mauro Perani and Enrica Sagradini, *Talmudic and Midrashic Fragments from the “Italian Genizah”: Reunification of the Manuscripts and Catalogue* (Florence: La Giuntina, 2004); Colette Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages*, ed. and trans. Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 234–56, esp. 237–39; Angel Sáenz-Badillos Pérez, “Fragmentos del Talmud, Misneh Torah y Biblia en el Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca,” *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 26.2 (1977): 95–104; Andreas Lehnhardt and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger eds., *Books within Books: New Discoveries in Old Book Bindings* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

²⁶ In addition to the references throughout the inquisitorial proceeding of Juan de Loperuelo, see also the following documents at the Archivo Histórico Nacional, *Diversos-Comunidades (Comunidad de Aldeas de Daroca)*; car. 73, no. 164 (Bartolomé de Loperuelo referred to as *juez*); car. 61, no. 98 (*baile general de Aragón*); car. 55, no. 223 (*justicia*); car. 75, no. 273 (*procurador general de la universidad y concejo*); car. 62, no. 287 (*escudero*); car. 67, no. 270 (*almotazaf*); car. 56, no. 302 (*jurado*).

Daroca.²⁷ As a matter of fact, Loperuelo's brother was one of the witnesses in the inquisitorial trial and his exonerating testimony may have played a part in Juan's relatively minor punishment, a fine of 1500 *sueldos* and an abjuration *de levi*.²⁸

Juan de Loperuelo himself was a citizen, a successful merchant, and the holder of various municipal positions.²⁹ On that note, it is interesting to indicate the somewhat porous boundaries in fifteenth-century Daroca between the different faiths. For example, Loperuelo does not deny visiting a synagogue, doing business with Jews, or eating together with Jews and Muslims.³⁰ However, throughout the proceeding Loperuelo denies the accusation of Judaizing and stresses that his behavior was always within the sphere of Christian normativity. Thus, when asked about his visits to the Daroca synagogue, he is recorded as responding that he might have gone to the synagogue for some business but "never showed reverence to the Torah nor did he take off his cap [out of respect]."³¹ His involvement in commissioning religious art before and after his inquisitorial interrogation is telling in that respect. A document from 1504 mentions that Loperuelo—or his son by the same name—was involved in commissioning a work of art for the Corporals chapel at the Santa María Collegiate Church. In this document Loperuelo is referred to as the *Regidor* of that chapel.³² We will return to the issue of the Corporals later on, but for the moment we can clearly say that at the end of the fifteenth century, the Loperuelo family was well established in Christian religious life and in circles of power in Daroca.

The evidence presented above establishes that Bermejo was connected to the conversos of Daroca in bonds of marriage and that his *Piedat* was commissioned by a patron with a taste for Christian art who was suspected of Judaizing practices. Consequently, the hypothesis that Bermejo or Loperuelo

²⁷ García Marco et al., *Procesos*, 80.

²⁸ García Marco et al., *Procesos*, 385.

²⁹ A very short biographical note is provided by Anna Ysabel d'Abrera, *The Tribunal of Zaragoza and Crypto-Judaism (1484–1515)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 21.

³⁰ On Juan de Loperuelo's commercial activities, see Miguel Ángel Motis Dolader, "Ordenamiento urbanístico de la judería de Daroca, morfología y funcionalidad," *Aragón en la Edad Media* 9 (1991): 137–78.

³¹ García Marco et al., *Procesos*, 408: "respondit que puede ser el aver ydo a la sinoga por algunos negocios, pero dice el nunca hizo reverencia a la Thora, ni se le quito el bonete." The word *bonete* might also refer to the secular clergy, who used to wear caps with four points (*bonetes*). We have evidence that Loperuelo's brother was a member of the clergy, but no evidence that Juan de Loperuelo himself belonged to the Church hierarchy.

³² Ruiz i Quesada, *Fuentes escritas*, 53, n. 33.

were indeed conversos is perfectly plausible but can only be viewed as a doubtful possibility. Moreover, there is no hard evidence that would identify the provider of the Hebrew paraphrase. Whether it was the painter, a member of his workshop, the patron, or an outside advisor, one of the people involved in the production of the painting was not only sufficiently versed in Hebrew to furnish this paraphrase (or had access to an unknown Hebrew text), but also desired to inscribe a Christological Hebrew message on the tomb of Christ. Here, due to the lack of further evidence, speculations prevail, among them that a converso like Alfonso de Zamora (born ca. 1474–76) may have provided the Hebrew for the painting, which was, as mentioned before, commissioned before 1474.³³ Ultimately, even if one or more of the people involved in the production or consumption *Piedat* were indeed conversos, that does not sufficiently explain why they would choose to portray Hebrew letters on Christ's tomb. The questions that Hebrew inscriptions raise, it seems to me, cannot be answered by the identification of the people involved, but rather by accounting for the pictorial and theological connotations of the inscription.

Christ of the Conversos?

A more sophisticated account is concentrated on the audience and specific content of the Hebrew inscription. In his recent studies dedicated to the phenomenon of converso artists in the Spanish Golden Age, Fernando Marías has suggested that Bermejo's painting was addressed to a Hebrew-reading audience and that it contained a specifically New Christian message. The argument is based on a formal comparison to several other panels that Marías claims belonged to the altarpiece in the San Francisco monastery.³⁴ These panels are similar in style, and all emphasize Christ's role as savior and depict angels. With the important exception of the *Piedat*, these panels also portray the Patriarchs. Arguably, this altarpiece communicated a message of redemption to people of Jewish origin through the acceptance of Christ as savior, a message that conversos who wished to be integrated in Christian society would no doubt welcome.

Without entering into the connoisseurial problems involved in associating the *Piedat* with the other panels,³⁵ the interpretation of the *Piedat* as specifically directed towards Christians of Jewish origin merits a more thorough

33 Lenowitz "Hebrew Script," 14–15.

34 Marías, "El problema," 250–51.

35 See my remarks in note 10.

consideration. Since there are no references to the Patriarchs in the image, we should ask whether there was something particularly converso about the combination of the Man-of-Sorrows iconography and the inscription's content. One possible interpretation lies in the association between Christ's human identity and Hebrew as a cultural marker of a first century Galilean Jew. Theologians such as Thomas Aquinas emphasized the necessity of Christ assuming a human body—being both flesh and God—in order to overcome death by suffering, something that a being of only divine nature could not have done.³⁶ It is tempting to link this focus on Christ's humanity to what some scholars have labeled “converso theology.”³⁷ A focus on the Jewish body and blood of Christ were commonplace among pro-converso authors in fifteenth century Spain. The converso theologian Juan de Torquemada, for instance, defended in his *Tractatus contra Madianitas et Ismaelitas* Jews and conversos in the context of the 1449 Toledo riots through the claim that an attack on the Jews and those of Jewish descent is a blasphemy against Christ himself, who assumed his humanity within the flesh of a Jew. Torquemada further developed his argument through a discussion of the Eucharist, in which Christians consume the flesh and blood of Christ:

From that people [i.e., the Jewish people] was taken up the true flesh of Christ and His most precious blood which is placed before us in this sacrament for the living sustenance of our souls, as John 6 said: “for my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink; whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.”³⁸

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Super epistolam S. Pauli apostoli ad Hebreos expositio*, 2: 4: “Oportuit ergo esse hominem qui deberet satisfacere, et Deum, qui solus habet potestatem super totum humanum genus, qui posset pro toto humano genere satisfacere. Per mortem ergo Dei et hominis destruxit eum qui habet mortis imperium.” in *In omnes S. Pauli apostoli epistolas commentaria*, 2 vols. (Turin: Marietti, 1929), 2: 321.

³⁷ Bruce Rosenstock, *New Men: Conversos, Christian Theology, and Society in Fifteenth-Century Castile (Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar 39)* (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2002).

³⁸ Juan de Torquemada, *Tractatus contra madianitas et ismaelitas*, 4:3: “cum de genere illo assumpta sit vera caro Christi et eius pretiosissimus sanguis, quae in hoc sacramento in vitalem sustentationem animarum nostrarum nobis propnitur, secundum illud Io. 6: *Caro [enim] mea vere est cibus, et sanguis meus vere est potus; qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem habet vitam aeternam [et ego resuscitabo eum in novissimo die].*” I used the edition of Carlos del Valle R., *Tratado contra los madianitas e ismaelitas, de Juan de Torquemada (Contra la discriminación conversa)* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2002), 158. More generally on pro-converso authors, see Claude B. Stuczynski, “Pro-Converso

From a certain hermeneutical point of view, then, Bermejo's *Piedat* could be viewed as a pro-converso theological argument made through pictorial language. Presenting the bleeding and suffering Christ together with a message in Hebrew may emphasize the Jewishness of his body and blood, with all the abovementioned Eucharistic connotations. The way that Christ's genitalia are portrayed in the painting support this interpretation. A close look suggests that Christ is circumcised, not a surprising feature for a first-century Jew, but still a noteworthy iconographic detail.³⁹

Without excluding this kind of reading, it should be noted that an over-determined focus on the human, Jewish body of Christ in this context would be misleading. The *Piedat*, as is generally the case with the Man of Sorrows iconography, presents a paradox to the spectator, as Christ appears both in his humanity and in his divinity, both man and God. Here the pictorial function of the inscription has great significance. It seems that in the specific case in question, the inscription is supposed to function as a learned game directing the viewer to focus on the salvific message of Christ's death, rather than on his humaneness or Jewishness. The content of the inscription, we should stress, refers to the promise Christ carries to restore life and to end death, to the transcendence of human life and death in his death. This transcendental emphasis coincides with broader devotional patterns in fifteenth century Aragon, for instance, in the widely popular works of Francesc Eiximenis, which emphasized Christ's divinity and not his humanity and suffering.⁴⁰ We can conclude, therefore, that for those who were able to read it, the Hebrew inscription was probably meant to guide the spectator's gaze beyond Christ's dying body. It emphasized instead his divinity and the promise of salvation he brought. Whether conversos were the audience of the image or not, the

Apologetics and Biblical Exegesis," in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Jonathan Deeter and Arturo Prats (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 151–76, with further references.

39 Christ's genitalia and sexuality were the subject of a heated debate between Leo Steinberg and Caroline Walker Bynum, a debate that exceeds the limits of the present discussion. For Steinberg's poignant summary of Bynum's argument and his critical reply, see *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), chap. 9; Bynum's critique can be found in "The Body of Christ in the Latter Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), chap. 3.

40 See extended discussion by Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2013).

message was one of eliminating differences in the salvation to come, not of highlighting Christ's Jewish pedigree.

Reassessing the Connection between Conversos and Hebrew Letters

Moving from the content to the medium, the assumption that Hebrew should be understood as a covert code decipherable only by people of Jewish extraction merits further thought. Not only can we not be sure about the level of Hebrew proficiency among conversos in late fifteenth-century Daroca and not only do we not have any evidence pointing to the Hebrew reading abilities of Bermejo or Loperuelo. It is also the case that the text itself does not have a direct Hebrew literary reference, but rather a Christian one. If conversos were familiar with this reference, it was due to their knowledge of Christian texts.

More importantly, it is essential to stress that Hebrew letters were not the exclusive domain of Jews and conversos. Hebrew and Hebraic knowledge loomed large in the intellectual pursuits of the late fifteenth century. This interest—mostly textual, but with implications for artistic practice—is generally termed Christian Hebraism. And although usually considered as a minor center for Christian Hebraism in comparison to Italy and Germany, late medieval Spain was in fact an important player in the wider movement for the study of Hebrew and post-biblical Jewish learning.⁴¹ As in other European centers of Hebraism, converts from Judaism played an indispensable part in this intellectual movement, as translators and teachers and, no less importantly, as mediators of the highly developed medieval grammatical and exegetic traditions. Significant as they may have been, conversos were only a part of this broader learned culture, as the interest in Hebrew knowledge was shared by Churchmen and courtly circles. This is evident in the case of the Alba Bible (finished in 1434), a translation of the Bible into Castilian with rabbinic commentaries and illumination commissioned by the master of the Order of Calatrava, Luis de Guzmán.⁴² It is also clearly the case with Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, one of the most influential figures in Spanish religious life. According to the account of Álvar Gómez de Castro, Cisneros wished to fully grasp the biblical text:

⁴¹ For an extensive list of Spanish students of Oriental languages, among them Hebrew, see Paul Colomiès, *Italia et Hispania Orientalis* (Hamburg: Sumtibus viduae Felgineriae, 1730), 209–56.

⁴² See Rodríguez Porto's essay in this volume.

And therefore, when he [Cisneros] was active in Sigüenza, already established and well off, he committed himself entirely to the study of Holy Scripture. In order to do this, he even employed, out of his sheer desire, a Jewish tutor to master Hebrew and Chaldean.⁴³

In the early 1500s, Cisneros, in his capacity as cardinal and confessor to Queen Isabella, initiated one of the most ambitious projects in Renaissance Spain, the Polyglot Bible. This Bible, produced at the University of Alcalá de Henares, presented side by side on each page the Latin Vulgata, the Greek Septuagint, the Hebrew Masoretic text, and the Aramaic Targum together with a Latin translation.⁴⁴ This project was Christian in nature and purpose, regardless of the fact that many conversos took part in it.

Bermejo's *Piedat* was created in a period that witnessed this increasing interest in Hebraic knowledge. Unlike this learned textual tradition, however, it manifests this interest through pictorial means. The visuality of the Hebrew letters, their form and symbolism, is essential in this case. Since there are no first-hand written documents informing us about Bermejo's artistic decisions, we can only situate them within a field of existing models. I would like to stress here that the question is not of influence, in the sense of earlier artists, images, or texts that Bermejo passively copied. Rather, we should try to understand how Bermejo positioned himself vis-à-vis these models, how he used the resources available to him and refashioned them in his own way.⁴⁵

Scholars working on inscriptions in art have emphasized that their readability is less important than their symbolic aspect. Cécile Treffort, for instance, has suggested in her study of Latin epigraphy in the Middle Ages that we see inscriptions before we read them, and that they function more as a sign than as a discourse.⁴⁶ This is especially the case when dealing with pseudo-inscriptions,

43 Álvar Gómez de Castro, *De rebus gestis a Francisco Ximenio, Cisnerio, Archiepiscopo Toletano, libri octo, liber 1* (Alcalá de Henares: Andream de Angulo, 1569), fol. 3v: "Ergo cum is Seguntiae ageret, iam vitae et divitiarum modo constituto, totum sese ad divinarum literarum studium convertit, adhibito etiam Hebreo praerceptore perdicendae Hebraiceae, Chaldaiceque linguae desiderio."

44 The bibliography on the subject is vast. For a discussion of the role conversos played in the Alcalá Polyglot Bible project, see Carlos Carrete Parrondo, *El judaísmo español y la inquisición* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), 129–59.

45 See on this issue the "Excursus against Influence," in Michael Baxandall's *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 58–62.

46 Cécile Treffort, *Paroles inscrites: À la découverte des sources épigraphiques latines du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Bréal, 2008). Along similar lines, Alexander Nagel has argued that the

a category that does not apply to the *Piedat*. Yet the inscription in Bermejo's painting does convey a symbolic message that goes beyond its textual content and would have resonated among people with no knowledge of Hebrew.

Hebrew letters are quite a common phenomenon in Western art in the pre-modern era. We have evidence of pseudo-Hebrew script as early as the sixth century and well into the modern era.⁴⁷ The phenomenon is without a doubt multifaceted and cannot be reduced to a single all-encompassing theory.⁴⁸ The simple point I would like to make is that Hebrew letters in Christian art usually serve one of two distinct Christian polemical arguments. The first, which may be called anti-Judaic, makes use of Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew script in order to mark certain figures as Jews or refer more generally to Judaism pejoratively. The second, which may be called supersessionist, appears in paintings that made use of Hebrew letters to represent the Jewish environment out of which Christianity emerged and of which it superseded. Thus, in specific scenes from Christian sacred history that were considered to have happened in "Jewish" settings, for instance, the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, or in depictions of objects known to portray Hebrew letters, such as the *Titulus Crucis* or the Tables of Law, the letters appeared as "historical" or "ethnographic" signifiers. It should be emphasized that in both the anti-Judaic images and those images

use of pseudo-inscriptions in Italian Renaissance art has an extra-linguistic value, that it points to a language beyond comprehensible language. See *idem*, "Twenty-Five Notes on Pseudoscript in Italian Art," *Res* 59/60 (2011): 228–48.

⁴⁷ See the broad surveys of Ilia Rodov, "Script in Christian Art," *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, 4 vols. (Boston: Brill, 2013), 3:462–77; Gad B. Sarfatti, "Hebrew Script in Western Visual Arts," *Italia* 13–15 (2001): 451–47; Sarfatti, "Addenda," *Italia* 16 (2004): 135–56; Avraham Ronen, "Hebrew Script in Fifteenth-Century European Art" [in Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 4.2 (1990): 1–8; and the very useful appendix at Lenowitz, "Hebrew Script," 19–20.

⁴⁸ The spectrum of possible meanings of Hebrew script in Christian art is demonstrated by Ruth Mellinkoff, who categorizes the use of Hebrew letters on a scale going from neutral through ambiguous to negative. See her *Outcasts*, 1:95–108. Some scholars have interpreted the existence of Hebrew script in Christian art in relation to the literature of *Asversus iudeos*. See Harris Lenowitz, "On Three Early Incidences;" Others linked it to the ambition for "historical authenticity" and the fascination with secrets that were prevalent in Renaissance humanistic thought. See Moshe Barasch, "Hebrew Inscriptions in the Art of the Renaissance" [in Hebrew], in *Scritti in memoria di Leone Carpi. Saggi sull'ebraismo Italiano*, ed. Daniel Carpi et al. (Jerusalem: Sally Mayer, 1967), 141–50; Gad B. Sarfatti, the scholar who wrote most extensively about the subject, argues that artists introduced Hebrew script into their works in order to (1) attain realism, (2) mark a person or an object as Jewish, and to (3) show erudition. See *idem*, "Hebrew Script in Western Visual Arts," 454.

that represent Christian history, the Hebrew letters fulfill their function regardless of the use of correct and meaningful Hebrew.

Thus, although the *Piedat* is linked to a possible converso milieu in Daroca, a broader view of the iconographical tradition of Hebrew in Christian art shows that there is no reason to think that the inscription was directed exclusively towards a converso audience. Understanding the text was not essential for this medium to make sense, nor was the interpretative community necessarily Jewish in origin.

Orientalizing the Tomb of Christ

Moving from the general iconographical tradition to the specific pictorial constellation of the *Piedat*, the location of the inscription on the tomb seems pivotal. Inscriptions on Christ's sepulcher are not an essential part of the tomb's iconography in late medieval art, but they do exist.⁴⁹ These texts aid in identifying the image as related to the Passion and to the suffering of Christ, although there is also evidence for tomb inscriptions that refer to the resurrection achieved through Christ.⁵⁰ Bermejo's *Piedat* is quite a singular case, however, for it uses legible Hebrew letters in this setting. The very few examples we have from European art during the period in question present pseudo-Hebrew

⁴⁹ See, for example, the Man of Sorrows in the mid-fourteenth-century Bohemian diptych now in the Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe with a Latin inscription that reads “the misery of the lord (*miseria Domini*), and reproduced at Hans Belting, *L'image et son public au Moyen Âge*, trans. Fortunato Israel (Saint Pierre de Salerne, France: Gérard Monfort, 1998), 26, plate 8 [originally published as *Idem, Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früher Bildtfeln der Passion* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1981)].

⁵⁰ An interesting case in point is the funerary chapel designed by Leone Battista Alberti for Giovanni di Paolo Rucellai. This chapel aimed to imitate the Holy Sepulcher and presented Latin inscriptions referring to the resurrection. See Anthony Grafton, *Leone Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (New York; Harvard University Press, 2002), 322. Similar interplay between text and image can also be found on an engraving by the Italian artist Mario Cartaro, found in the National Library of Spain and dated to 1568 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, invent/421). The engraving shows the dead Christ held by an angel above his tomb with a Latin inscription on the sepulcher that reads: “HIC IACVIT NOSTRI CAVSA MENS VNICA MVNDI ET FINE, ET MEDIO, PRINCIPIOQ. CARENS.” The inscription on the cartouche reads: “QVIS CREDAT MORTEM MORIENS, MVNDVMQ. TRIVMPHAT, ET SATANAM CHRISTVS, TARTARA ET IMA DOMAT SIC CADIT, VT CAEDAT, CREDIT VICTORIA VICTO DECIPIT AVTHORES INVIDA TECHNA SVOS.” The reference to Heb. 2:14 is obvious.

inscriptions.⁵¹ What is more, to the best of my knowledge, there are no examples in Spanish Man of Sorrows images from this period that contain pseudo-Hebrew on the tomb, much less Hebrew letters that convey a Christological message.

There is, however, a rather surprising possible visual model to Bermejo's unique *Piedat*. Although hardly treated in existing scholarship, in late medieval Aragonese altarpieces one can find examples of Christ's sepulcher with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions. Generally referred to as pseudo-Kufic due to one of the Arabic scripts imitated, the phenomenon is more commonly known in Renaissance Italian painting and, to a lesser extent, in Dutch art.⁵² But examples of pseudo-Kufic letters do exist in Aragonese, Valencian, and Catalonian art, all areas in which Bermejo lived and worked. More than this, a specifically regional tradition in which the tomb of Christ was represented with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions flourished in Aragon and Catalonia.

One late fourteenth-century example of this tradition is the Altarpiece of the Virgin (1367–81, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya), attributed to Perre Serra or to his brother Jaume. This Aragonese work, made for the monastery of Santa María de Sigüenza, Huesca, has a panel showing Christ debating with rabbis, the latter holding books with pseudo-Hebrew script. In the same altarpiece, a resurrection scene panel depicts pseudo-Arabic letters on the tomb of Christ.⁵³ Another early fifteenth-century Catalan altarpiece with scenes from the life of St. Andrew, attributed to the Master of Roussillon (Cloisters, New York), shows in the bottom panel an image of the Man of Sorrows very similar to the *Piedat*. In the work of the Master of Roussillon, the tomb is inscribed with an Oriental-looking script, though not necessarily pseudo-Arabic.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See, for instance, the Resurrection of the Master of the Landau Altar (1468–75, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg). For further discussion and references, see Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 104–5.

⁵² The term “pseudo-Kufic” was first introduced by George C. Miles, in his “Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964): 1–32, esp. 20. For a recent survey on the matter, including images and extensive bibliography, see Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 51–72.

⁵³ Pseudo-Arabic letters also appear in this altarpiece on the cradle of baby Jesus. See <http://www.museunacional.cat/es/coleccio/retablo-de-la-virgen/jaume-serra/015916-cjt>. Similar mixture of pseudo-Hebrew and pseudo-Arabic can be found in Jaume Serra's Altarpiece of St Stephen (ca. 1385, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya). See <http://www.museunacional.cat/es/coleccio/retablo-de-san-esteban/jaume-serra/003947-cjt>.

⁵⁴ This inscription could be understood as an example of Mongol script (phags-pa), another Oriental script that was used by late medieval artists. See on this interesting phenomenon,

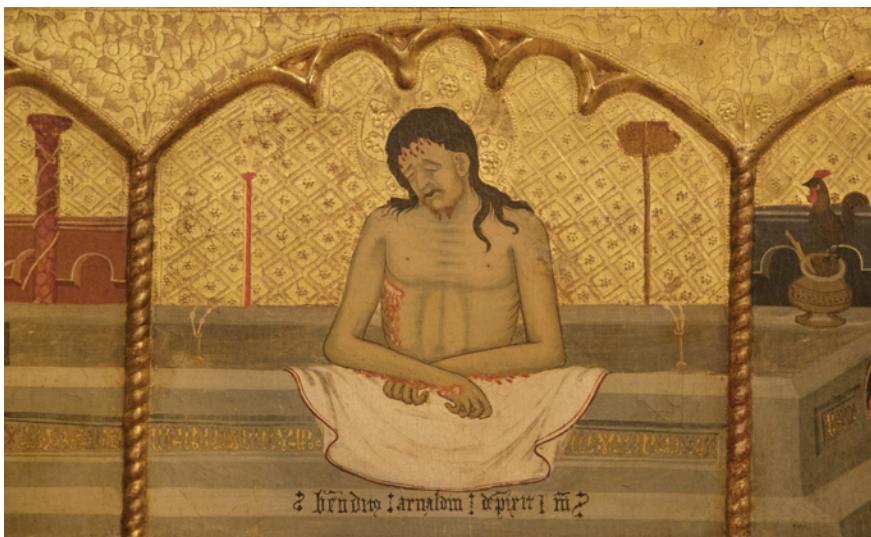


FIGURE 4.4 *Benito Arnaldín, "Man of Sorrows", first half of the 15th century, Church of St. Felix of Girona, Torralba de Ribota (Zaragoza).*

Significantly, in the second half of the fifteenth century this tradition was particularly strong in the localities surrounding Zaragoza, including Daroca. An interesting example of this Aragonese tradition is the Man of Sorrows in the St. Martin of Tour altarpiece (Fig. 4.4), in the San Félix de Gerona church in Torralba de Ribota (Zaragoza). Here, the pseudo-Arabic is adjacent to a meaningful Latin inscription that reads, “Benito Arnaldín painted me” (*Bendito Arnaldin depinxit mi*). There are other examples of painters’ signatures on Christ’s tomb from this period,⁵⁵ yet Arnaldín’s painting is unique for presenting an interplay of both Latin and pseudo-Arabic. The Latin signature is written in bigger, more conspicuous letters than the pseudo-Arabic letters, which are depicted as ornamental background. It thus gives the impression of a palimpsest, as if the Latin inscription is written over the inscription in pseudo-Arabic.

Hidemichi Tanaka, “Giotto and the Influences of the Mongols and Chinese on his Art,” *Art History* [Tohoku University, Japan] 6 (1984): 1–15; *Idem*, “The Mongolian Script in Giotto’s Paintings at the Scrovegni Chapel at Padova,” in *Europäische Kunst um 1300*, ed. Gerhard Schmidt with Elisabeth Liskar [Akten des xxv. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte, Vienna, 1983] (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), 167–74.

⁵⁵ Compare this, for instance, to Miguel Ximénez, *Predela con la Resurrección de Cristo* (ca. 1475–1485, Prado), where the tomb is inscribed with “migel ximenes me pinto.”

The former thus appears as a manifestation of pictorial self-consciousness, while the latter is disguised as an original part of the structure of the tomb.

Even more striking is the existence of this iconography in Daroca itself and in the nearby town of Morata de Jiloca, where the Master of Morata and his workshop produced various images with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on Christ's tomb in the second half of the fifteenth century. In the Altarpiece of the Life of Christ (sometimes called The Descent or The True Cross) in the Church of St. Martin of Tours in Morata de Jiloca, there are pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on both the Resurrection panel and the Man of Sorrows panel (Fig. 4.5). A Man of Sorrows with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions also appears in the Master's Altarpiece of St. Fabian and St. Sebastian, now in Daroca's Museo Comarcal y Municipal (Fig. 4.6). This image is very similar to the Man of Sorrows in Morata de Jiloca except that here the letters are less ornamental. In all of the above cases, Oriental-looking script is inscribed on the tomb of Christ without presenting any "real" language.⁵⁶

What kind of visual argument was deployed in these images? Scholars working on pseudo-Kufic letters noted their ornamental function and demonstrated that they were made in imitation of Islamic artistic traditions. Yet while the use of pseudo-kufic as pictorial ornamentation on ceramics and textiles is understandable, its use on Christ's tomb or on Mary's halo, as evidenced in various works of Gentile da Fabriano (ca. 1370–1427), is less obvious and demands a different kind of explanation, one that takes into account the theological implications of such an act. Among the few scholars who have worked on the subject, there is a shared opinion that these scripts were mistakenly associated with the early Christian era. This has to do with an anachronistic association in the West of first-century Palestine with the Muslim rule over the Holy Land during the late Middle Ages and therefore with the Arabic language.⁵⁷ This view, it seems to me, could be equally applied to the Aragonese Man of Sorrows with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions. The use of Oriental script in this context serves without a doubt an ornamental purpose but it also produces a temporal and geographical effect. It locates the tomb of Christ in the

⁵⁶ Fabián Mañas Ballestín claims that both the inscription in the Man of Sorrows in Morata de Jiloca and in the one in Daroca Museo Comarcal there are in fact real Arabic phrases. The former, according to him, reads "he spoke for us when he died for you." The latter reads "he did not speak for us [but] only when he died for you." This suggestion is not supported by any epigraphic analysis and seems rather unconvincing. See Mañas Ballestín, *Pintura gótica aragonesa* (Zaragoza: Guara, 1979), 136–41, esp. 139.

⁵⁷ Moshe Barasch, "Some Oriental Pseudo-Inscriptions in Renaissance Art," *Visible Language* 23, nos. 2–3 (1989): 170–87; Nagel, "Twenty-Five Notes", 230–232.

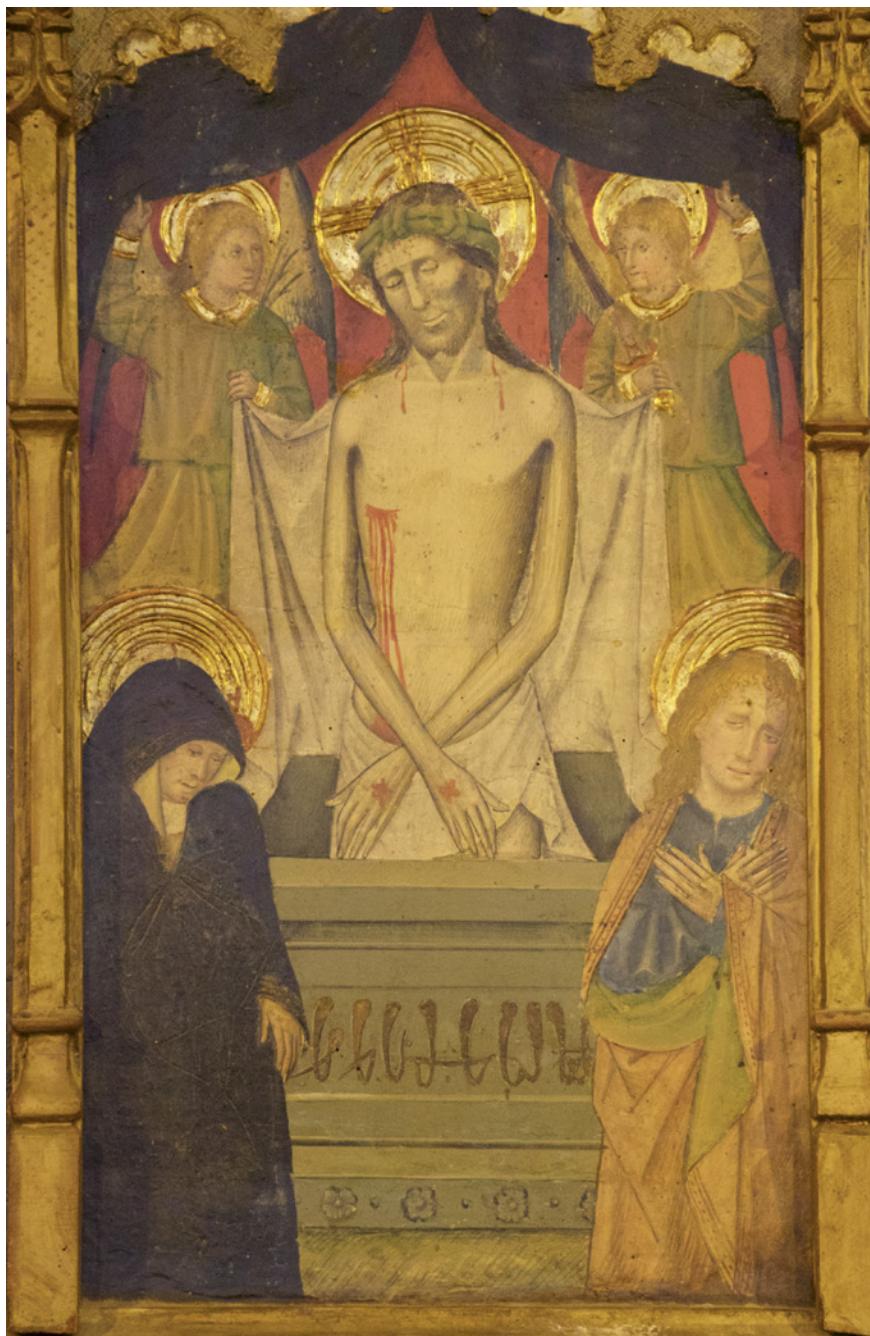


FIGURE 4.5 *Master of Morata, "Man of Sorrows", second half of the 15th century, Church of St. Martin of Tours, Morata de Jiloca (Zaragoza).*



FIGURE 4.6 *Master of Morata, "Man of Sorrows", second half of the 15th century, Museo Comarcal y Municipal, Daroca.*

ancient Orient, where Christianity originated. Through the device of the inscription, these artists "historicized" Christ.⁵⁸

This preliminary and in no way conclusive survey clearly shows the existence of an artistic tradition in Aragon in which images that bear striking resemblance to Bermejo's *Piedat* were produced. Bermejo worked in the same artistic environment for years and was surely acquainted with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions. In fact, we have clear evidence that he used this artistic device in his paintings. In the Santa Engracia altarpiece, which narrates the history of the fourth-century Portuguese saint who came to Zaragoza only to face Roman persecution and become a martyr, the Roman governor Dacian is depicted by Bermejo with a hat inscribed with pseudo-Kufic letters (Fig. 4.3).

Bermejo's *Piedat* should be considered within the context of the artistic exploration of the iconography of the Man of Sorrows, an iconography well known for its variety and mutability.⁵⁹ In late fifteenth-century Aragon, this exploration also meant inscribing Oriental languages on Christ's tomb. Yet while the formal similarities between the Man of Sorrows with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions and Bermejo's *Piedat* are evident, so are the differences. One fundamental difference that demands an explanation is the fact that the inscription in the *Piedat* alone utilizes "real language" and communicates a Christological message. Bermejo's image echoes the Orientalizing pictorial technique used in the Aragonese Man of Sorrows examined. The implications of making use of real Hebrew, however, have deeper resonances.⁶⁰

58 These Aragonese Man of Sorrows merit a much more detailed study. Situated in a region noted for its Mudéjar population, we cannot reject the possibility of a proselytizing agenda behind these images. In addition, we should take into account that many Mudéjar masters participated in the construction of the churches in which these altarpieces are placed, and thus the possibility that they inserted these inscriptions is also valid. However, the fact that these Man of Sorrows do not present "real" Arabic (in comparison with inscriptions such as that of Yuçaf Adolmalih in Maluenda's Santa María church, for instance), gives the impression that the basic function of these pseudo-inscriptions was to locate Christ anachronistically in the Orient.

59 Belting, *L'image et son public*, 44–45. See also Mitchell B. Merback, "The Man of Sorrows in Northern Europe: Ritual Metaphor and Therapeutic Exchange," in *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows*, ed. Catherine R. Puglisi and William L. Barcham (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2013), 77–116.

60 A comparable phenomenon, that serves as a methodological model for the discussion here, is the case of the Arabic inscriptions of Norman Sicily studied by Jeremy Johns. There, the inscriptions had a symbolic value regardless of their content, as they appropriated the language of the former rule and thus asserted the power of the new sovereign. And yet, through the presentation of "real" Arabic, the inscriptions fashioned the Cappella Palatina as a Meccan sanctuary and conveyed the idea that the Norman king

The Spirit of the Letter

What purpose did a Christological Hebrew inscription serve in the *Piedat?* Surveying pseudo-Hebrew inscriptions on Christ's sepulcher in late Medieval art, Ruth Mellinkoff has argued that the connotation of Hebrew in this context is negative, as it represents the Old Law and death, both things to be overcome by Christ's resurrection.⁶¹ Even if we accept this general point, the Hebrew in Bermejo's painting differs from the pseudo-inscriptions discussed by Mellinkoff both by being meaningful and by drawing on post-Biblical sources. There is no reason, therefore, to attribute a negative or "Jewish" connotation to the Hebrew here, nor to see it as an example of supersessionist ideology manifested through a figural reading.⁶² Bermejo's image also does not correspond to any scene from Christian history that mentions Hebrew, nor does it refer directly to the sacred Hebrew text. As a first-century sepulcher in Palestine, Christ's tomb was of course a Jewish object in itself, and in that sense, Hebrew letters perhaps were meant to serve in this context as a Jewish marker.⁶³ However, if

not only mastered the language and the cultural heritage behind it, but forged the island's inhabitants into a single *populus trilinguis*. See Jeremy Johns, "Arabic Inscriptions in the Cappella Palatina: Performativity, Audience, Legibility and Illegibility," in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, ed. Antony Eastmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 124–47.

61 Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1: 104.

62 Compare here in particular Carpaccio's *Meditations on the Passion* (1490, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Some have suggested that the barely legible words on the tomb relate to Job 19:25, a commonplace prefiguration of Christ. See Frederick Hartt, "Carpaccio's Meditation on the Passion," *Art Bulletin* 22 (1940): 25–35. Barasch, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 142.

63 We have evidence of ancient epitaphs that convey Jewish belief in the afterlife, but to my knowledge, there is no evidence of first-century Christian epitaphs in Hebrew that mention Christ's resurrection. Perhaps further scholarship will discover Hebrew Christian epitaphs coming from communities of Judeo-Christians, but it is highly doubtful that Bermejo would have had first-hand knowledge of them. On ancient Jewish inscriptions, see Pieter Willem van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy* (300 BCE–700 CE) (Leuven: Peeters, 1991). On late medieval Sephardic tomb inscriptions, see Ramón Bermejo Mesa, *De epigrafía hispano-hebreo. Inscripciones sepulcrales hebraicas pertenecientes al cementerio judío de Toledo (siglos XIII al XV)* (Madrid: C. Bermejo, 1935); Jorge Casanovas Miró, *Las inscripciones funerarias hebraicas medievales de España* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004); Francisco Cantera Burgos and José María Millás Vallicrosa, *Las inscripciones hebraicas de España* (Madrid: CSIC, 1956).

the purpose of the inscription was only to identify the setting as Jewish, some letters or even pseudo-letters would have sufficed. But the *Piedat* presents an elaborate interplay between image and text in a way that addresses fundamental theological issues. The location of the letters on the sepulcher is key in that regard. We should bear in mind that Christ's tomb is among the holiest places for Christianity and served as testimony for one of its most important dogmas. In the words of Eusebius:

This most holy cave present[s] a faithful similitude of his return to life, in that, after lying buried in darkness, it again emerged to light, and afforded to all who came to witness the sight, a clear and visible proof of the wonders of which that spot had once been the scene, a testimony to the resurrection of the Savior clearer than any voice could give.⁶⁴

A proof clearer than any voice for Christ's resurrection and his salvific role turned into a visual testimony in Bermejo's painting. In the *Piedat*, it assumes a specifically liturgical meaning, with its highly Eucharistic iconography. The bleeding, suffering Christ is standing accompanied by two weeping angels, who wear the vestments of an archdeacon and a deacon, suggesting an analogy to the Catholic clerics who perform the Mass.⁶⁵ His blood flows toward the chalice, next to which one can perceive a drop of blood. The chalice itself, situated at the bottom of the painting, is exceptionally big, almost as if it were within the reach of the viewer.

The *Piedat* also has a particularly Darocan connotation, as the city was famous for its miraculous relic, the bloodstained Sacred Corporals.⁶⁶ In fact,

64 Eusebius, "Vita Constantini, 3: 28," in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. and trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 14 vols., 2nd ser. (1890; repr., Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1997), 1: 527–28.

65 The association of the iconography of the vested angels with the Mass was common in Latin Christendom beginning in the thirteenth century (with Byzantine precedents). See Maurice B. McNamee, S.J., *Vested Angels: Eucharistic Allusions in Early Netherlandish Paintings* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), esp. 43–59.

66 The connection to the Corporals was made first by Berg-Sobré, *El Bermejo*, 74. Daroca's bloodstained corporals are perhaps modeled upon the Bolsena corporals, although they have a specific Spanish character. According to popular legend, in 1239 Christian troops from Daroca, Teruel, and Calatayud were laying siege to the Muslim fortress of Chiva, near Xàtiva (Valencia). One of the priests accompanying the soldiers celebrated Mass, only to be interrupted by an attack of the enemy. He quickly hid the consecrated hosts in a corporal, placing it under rocks nearby. As the legend goes, after the very successful

there are strong connections between Bermejo's *Piedat* and the iconography of the Corporales. Daroca's Collegiate church is abundant with images showing angels presenting the bloodstained Eucharistic cloth. The bloodstained veil and the bloodstained corporals both evoke the Eucharistic miracle of the Mass.

The Eucharistic symbolism and Darocan touch, however, are supplemented by a more complex visual argument made through the Hebrew letters. Similarly to the attempt to Orientalize the tomb of Christ with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions and thus to locate it geographically and temporally, the Hebrew paraphrasis has "historical" and theological connotations. One can find similar uses of Christianized Hebrew in the art of the period. Although not very common, at times Christian dogma was conveyed through Hebrew letters. There are many examples of the use of biblical quotes in Hebrew as a prefiguration of Christ and Christianity. But there are also images that go a step further and use Hebrew letters to convey New Testament and Catholic liturgical messages. One telling example is the *Marriage of Mary* (Fig. 4.7) by the Master of the Life of Mary, a German painter working in the second half of the fifteenth century. In this painting we have nothing less than the Christian Credo written in Latin using the Hebrew script on a plaque behind the priest.⁶⁷ Similarly to the *Piedat*,

battle, which ended with the Christian conquest of the fortress, the priest found that the six wafers—the same number as the Christian captains—had bled into the hidden corporal, leaving their imprint in the form of six round drops of blood. In addition to this miracle, one of the mules of the Christian camp is said to have come before the corporal and knelt down. Eventually, the relic was taken to Daroca. It lies to this day in the Santa María de los Sagrados Corporales Collegiate Church in the town, where it is still a venerated relic. Importantly, beginning in the mid-fifteenth century there was a renewal and intensification of interest in the cult and the legend of the relic, evident in a history written by a monk from Luchente in 1470 and the more influential work by Gaspar Miguel de la Cueva, *Historia d[e]l diuino mysterio del sanctissimo sacramento del altar q[ue] esta en los corporales de Daroca ...* (Alcalá de Henares: Joan de Brocar, 1539). De la Cueva's *Historia* was reprinted many times, and various other accounts of the miraculous corporals exist. See also Berg-Sobré, *Piedat*, 499; José Luis Corral Lafuente, "Una Jerusalén en el occidente medieval. La ciudad de Daroca y el milagro de los corporales," *Aragón en la Edad Media* 2 (1995): 61–122.

⁶⁷ See the short and informative discussion in Sarfatti, *Hebrew Script in Western Visual Arts*, 519–20. Another relevant example is Jacopo de Barbari's *Blessing Christ* (1503, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden). In this image, Hebrew letters that read "I will be faith" and "The life, YHWH" (אָנֹכִי אֲהֵה אֶמְנוּת הַחַיִים יְהוָה) are inscribed on Christ's robe. The inscription imitates biblical Hebrew, but does not actually quote any specific verse. This pastiche is evidently supposed to offer a figural reading. Koerner notes that this painting was considered in mid-sixteenth century to be an authentic historical document of Christ's true appearance, but does not provide any reference. Joseph Leo



FIGURE 4.7 *Master of the Life of Mary, "Marriage of Mary", second half of the 15th century, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.*

this image anachronistically manipulates Hebrew letters in order to showcase Christian dogma. In the *Marriage of Mary*, the Hebrew letters both help identify the setting as Jewish and insert the Credo, which was written, of course, much after Mary's life, into the language and culture of the Jews before Christ's time. Likewise, the verses paraphrased in the *Piedat* were originally written in Greek or in Latin. By inscribing these words on the tomb in Hebrew, not only is the sepulcher identified as a Jewish space in first century Palestine, but the dogma itself—that Jesus was the true Messiah and that his death brings eternal life—appears as already existing during Christ's time. Furthermore, the Hebrew inscription, though echoing Paul's words or Augustine's exegesis, is written in the first person, thus presenting Christ speaking to the viewer. In these images, an anachronistic use of Hebrew was made in order to relate Christianity to its

Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 116.

Jewish origins and, at same time, to show that already in pre-Christian times, the dogmas of the faith were prefigured in Hebrew. Unlike the hermeneutical method of figural interpretation, these images are not reading things to come in the Hebrew biblical text. Rather, the artists were using the symbolic aspect of the Hebrew letter, not the Hebrew text, to appropriate the language from Judaism into a pictorial *Hebraica veritas*. Hebraizing the Christological phrase in the *Piedat* functions, in that sense, as an authoritative gesture. Hebrew was, after all, the primeval language in the minds of the Church Fathers.⁶⁸

This authoritative gesture should also be understood in the context of a polemic between different sacred languages.⁶⁹ This is because, as mentioned earlier, Hebrew is not the only language that appears in the *Piedat*. The Latin inscription on the tiles at the bottom of the image is equally integral to the composition and should be understood in relation to the Hebrew inscription. The interplay between the Latin and the Hebrew in the *Piedat* is articulated through the use of space. Christ, whose feet are on the Latin-inscribed tiles and in fact conceal (together with the chalice) the indecipherable Latin words, is situated between the inscriptions. The legible Hebrew is inscribed on the tomb, where he will be entombed and from where he will be resurrected. It relates directly and clearly to the meaning of his death. In contrast, the Latin letters, while correct, do not form a legible sentence.⁷⁰ In this game of concealment and exposure, Hebrew emerges not only as more readable but also as the one through which the Christian dogma of Christ's life-giving death is articulated and conveyed.⁷¹

68 One example among many is Augustine, *De civitate dei*, 16: 11, eds., Bernhard Dombart and Alphonse Kalb [Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 48] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 513–15. For useful surveys of the subject, see Irven M. Resnick, “Lingua Dei, Lingua Hominis: Sacred Language and Medieval Texts,” *Viator* 21 (1990): 51–74; Josef Eshkult, “Augustine and the Primeval Language in Early Modern Exegesis and Philology,” *Language and History* 56.2 (2013): 98–119.

69 Daniel Stein Kokin, “Polemical Language: Hebrew and Latin in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish-Christian Debate,” *Jewish History* 29.1 (2015): 1–38.

70 Jaime Barrachina Navarro offers an interesting, yet rather speculative reading of the cryptic Latin letters as related to the Eucharistic symbolism, see *idem*, *Bartolomé Bermejo*, 146–47. I find this reading suggestive, but the point remains clear: in the *Piedat*, only the Hebrew inscription is a fully formed, legible sentence. For discussion of other cryptic Latin inscriptions in Bermejo’s oeuvre, see Francesc Ruiz i Quesada’s contributions in the same catalogue.

71 The degree to which this constellation of languages is a polemical statement can be seen through a comparison to the opposite (and much more common) statement articulated in *The Fountain of Life* (1430–40, Museo del Prado), attributed to a follower of Van Eyck. There, as Felipe Pereda has shown, the inverted Hebrew letters on the Jewish scrolls form a part of a larger theological argument about Jewish carnal reading and blindness to the

The contrast with a language so authoritative in Christian thought is without a doubt one of the hermeneutical keys to the painting. Throughout the Middle Ages, Christian authors articulated the relationships between the three sacred languages—Hebrew, Latin, and Greek—usually claiming their interdependence though admitting that Hebrew is the primordial language.⁷² But in late medieval Spain, the humanistic ideal of *ad fontes* prompted a general return to Hebrew and destabilized the status of Latin. Already Profiat Duran leveled a critique at the quality of the Vulgata translation, calling Jerome “the disrupter” (*המשבש*). The important biblical exegete Pablo de Santa María, previously known as the Burgos rabbi Solomon ha-Levi, justified his *Additiones* (1429) to Nicholas de Lyra’s *Postilla* by arguing that the latter had not mastered Hebrew.⁷³ Importantly, this turn from Latin to Hebrew was not exclusively a Jewish or convero agenda. In his prologue to the Complutense Polyglot Bible, Cardinal Cisneros wrote:

No translation can fully and exactly represent the sense of the original at least in that language in which our Savior himself spoke ... Every theologian should also be able to drink of that water which springeth up to eternal life, at the fountainhead itself.⁷⁴

truth. The Latin inscriptions, on the other hand, are legible and present a quote from the Song of the Songs. Furthermore, the latter represent angelic singing, in contrast to “the mute letters of the Jews.” See Felipe Pereda, “Eyes That They Should Not See, and Ears That They Should Not Hear: Literal Sense and Spiritual Vision in the ‘Fountain of Life,’” in *Fiction sacrée: Spiritualité et esthétique durant le premier âge moderne*, ed. Ralph Dekoninck, Agnès Guiderdoni and Émilie Granjon (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 113–55, esp. 139.

⁷² A good overview is provided by Ryan Szpiech, “Latin as a Language of Authoritative Tradition,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. Ralph J. Hexter and David Townsend (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63–85.

⁷³ In his prologue, Pablo wrote: “In littera hebraica ad quam pluries recurrit non videtur fuisse sufficienter eruditus quasi illam in pueritia didicisset, sed de illa videtur habuisse notitiam quasi ab aliis in aetate adulta mendicato suffragio acquisitam.” *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1852), 113:46. I thank Yosi Yisraeli for informing me of this.

⁷⁴ Quoted from the translation in James P.R. Lyell, *Cardinal Ximenes, Statesman, Ecclesiastic, Soldier and Man of Letters, with an Account of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible* (London: Grafton and Co., 1917), 26–27. This is not to say that Hebrew’s primeval status was universally accepted; rather, it was constantly contested. The same Cisneros is known to have said that the Polyglot page introduces the Vulgate Latin in the middle of the page, between the Greek and Hebrew, “as if between the Synagogue and the Church of the East, setting them, like two thieves, on this side and that, with Jesus, that is the Roman or Latin Church, in the middle.” This is Dunkelgrün’s translation of Cisneros’s “Prologus

A lust for the original sense that was lost in translation swept learned circles in late medieval Spain. The *Piedat* was an artifact made within this religious humanist culture, with its obsession with origins and fascination with primeval languages. By paraphrasing in Hebrew ideas derived from Paul and Augustine on Christ's life-giving death, Bermejo's *Piedat* presented itself as an ancient and authoritative relic from the early days of Christianity. This gesture invited the viewer to drink straight from the fountainhead itself. Yet it was also a polemical gesture, and in a double sense. The inscription was a part of an inter-religious polemic with Judaism, whose language it had appropriated to convey a post-biblical Christian message anachronistically. And it was a part of an intra-religious linguistic struggle within Christianity, with the claim it made about Hebrew's primacy over Latin as the language of the sacred message.

A general thirst for Hebrew knowledge existed in late fifteenth-century Spain, a period that witnessed large-scale translation projects and the production of grammatical works and dictionaries. Conversos had an important role in the rise of Spanish Hebraism as bearers of linguistic and rabbinical knowledge. Yet cultural processes cannot be reduced to the identity of some of their protagonists. The tendency of Christian Hebraist discourse to "colonize" Hebrew, to incorporate Hebraic learning into Christian discourse while separating it from Judaism and Jews, has been noted by various scholars.⁷⁵ Bermejo's *Piedat* should be viewed within the wider dynamics in which Hebrew was

ad lectorem," in *Vetus testamentum multiplici lingua ...* [1st volume of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible] (Alcalá de Henares: Arnaldo Guillén de Brocar, 1517). See Theodore W. Dunkelgrün, "The Multiplicity of Scripture: The Confluence of Textual Traditions in the Making of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (1568–1573)" (PhD Diss., The University of Chicago, 2012), 26. We also know that in the sixteenth century, many of the Hebraists in the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá were persecuted by the Inquisition, and the study and teaching of Hebrew had to be constantly apologized for. For an interesting case of Hebrew apologetics, see Adolf Neubauer, "Alfonso de Zamora," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 7.3 (1895): 398–417.

75 Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Censorship, Editing and the Reshaping of Jewish Identity: The Catholic Church and Hebrew Literature in the Sixteenth Century," in *Hebraica veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison Couder and Jeffrey S. Shoulson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 125–55; Marcia Kupfer, "Abraham Circumcises Himself: A Scene at the Endgame of Jewish Utility to Christian Art," in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 143–82. See also Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). Similar, to some extent, is the argument made by Susannah Heschel, "Christ's Passion:

appropriated by Christian discourse, in a process that disjointed the letters from their original cultural setting and imbued them with new spirit. At the same time, Bermejo's image should be distinguished from the learned textual tradition that comprised the bulk of Christian Hebraism. The visual medium has its own workings, and together with polemical purposes the image deals with problems such as how to represent the "historical" tomb of Christ. Here the *Piedat* shows striking similarities to the local tradition of the Man of Sorrows with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions. It seems that in late fifteenth-century Daroca, there was still some freedom to experiment with different models of historicizing Christ. The quest for origins and the available visual languages produced various ways to think about difference and history, ways that cannot be reduced to rigid binaries.

Thus, instead of seeing the Hebrew inscription as a natural choice for conversos, or a kind of internal code used to send a covert message, I suggest that we understand it as both an attempt to legitimize the Christological message by drawing anachronistically on an authoritative language and as a hermeneutical device meant to assist the spectator in allowing his gaze to transcend the humanity of Christ and see the spiritual meaning of Christ's death. Hebrew, in that sense, functions in the painting as both a historical and a transcendental language; yet in both of these two aspects the spirit of the letter is Christian, not Jewish or converso.

"Homoeroticism and the Origins of Christianity," in *Mel Gibson's Bible*, ed. Timothy K. Beal and Tod Linafelt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 99–119.

CHAPTER 5

Forgotten Witnesses: The Illustrations of Ms Escorial, I.I.3 and the Dispute over the Biblias Romanceadas

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Abstract

This article offers a preliminary survey of the miniatures illustrating the *Biblia romanceada* held at the Escorial Library under the shelf number I.I.3, whose precise date and provenance have been a matter of dispute among scholars for decades. The scrutiny of the stylistic features of these illustrations together with a reassessment of the scarce archival sources related to this work allows for a definite association of Escorial, MS I.I.3 with Enrique de Guzmán, 2nd Duke of Medina Sidonia (d. 1492). However, the contextualized analysis of this lavishly decorated manuscript—which was part of a trend in aristocratic patronage and the epitome of already established traditions in Bible illustration—may contribute not only to a re-appraisal of this singular work but also to a better understanding of the multifaceted phenomena lying behind the production and reception of the remaining fifteenth-century illustrated Bibles in the vernacular, all of them translated from Hebrew but intended for a Christian audience.

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Keywords

vernacular translations of the bible – bible illustration – inquisition – conversos – Hieronymite order – Enrique de Guzmán (d. 1492) – Nicolás Gómez

The zeal shown by the Inquisition in confiscating and destroying most of the medieval vernacular Bibles found in aristocratic and ecclesiastical hands—considered first as tokens of crypto-Jewish beliefs and later as instrumental in the dissemination of Reformed ideas—makes it almost a miracle that thirteen of these *romanceamientos* are still preserved, in addition to other fragments and partial versions of some biblical books that have survived either as independent volumes or as part of historiographical texts and miscellanea.¹ With

¹ Among the vast bibliography devoted to the topic, see: Joaquín Lorenzo Villanueva, *De la lección de Sagrada Escritura en lengua vulgar* (Valencia: Benito Monfort, 1791); Samuel Berger, “Les Bibles castillanes,” *Romania* 28 (1899): 360–408 and 508–67; Américo Castro, Agustín Millares Carlo, and Ángel José Battistessa, eds., *Biblia medieval romanceada según los manuscritos escurialenses I-j-3, I-j-8 y I-j-6* (Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1927); José Llamas, *Biblia medieval romanceada judeo-cristiana. Versión del Antiguo Testamento en el siglo XIV, sobre los textos hebreo y latino*, 2 vols. (Madrid: CSIC, 1950–55); Margherita Morreale, “Apuntes bibliográficos para la iniciación al estudio de las Biblias medievales en castellano,” *Sefarad* 20 (1960): 66–109; Morreale, “Alcune considerazioni sulla Bibbia in volgare con un aggiornamento del saggio Vernacular Bible in Spain (Cambridge History of the Bible),” in *La Bibbia in italiano tra Medioevo e Rinascimento (Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Firenze, Certosa del Galuzzo, 1996)*, ed. Lino Leonardi (Florence: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galuzzo, 1998), 255–87; Eleazar Gutwirth, “Religión, historia y las Biblias romanceadas,” *Revista Catalana de Teología* 13, no. 1 (1988): 115–33; Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja, “Biblias romanceadas,” in *Diccionario filológico de la literatura medieval española: Textos y transmisión*, ed. Carlos Alvar and José Manuel Lucía Megías (Madrid: Castalia, 2002), 213–23; Sánchez-Prieto, “Biblia e historiografía en los códices medievales,” in *Los códices literarios en la Edad Media: Interpretación, técnicas y catalogación*, ed. Pedro M. Cátedra, Eva Belén Carro Carvajal, and Javier Durán Barceló (Madrid: CiLengua, Instituto del Libro y la Lectura, 2009), 71–90; Gemma Avenoza, *La Biblia de Ajuda y la Megilat Antiochus en romance* (Madrid: CSIC, 2001); Avenoza, “Las traducciones de la Biblia en castellano en la Edad Media,” in *La Biblia en la literatura española*, ed. Gregorio del Olmo Lete (Madrid: Trotta, 2008), 13–75; Avenoza, *Biblias castellanias medievales* (San Millán de la Cogolla: CiLengua, 2011); Avenoza, “The Bible in Spanish and Catalan,” in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, *The Medieval Period From 600 to 1450*, ed. Richard Madsen and E. Ann Matter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 288–306; F. Javier Pueyo Mena, “Biblias romanceadas y en ladino,” in *Sefardíes: Literatura y lengua de una nación dispersa*, ed. Iacob M. Hassan and Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2008), 193–263; Emily C. Francomano, “Castilian Vernacular Bibles in Iberia, c. 1250–1500,” in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception,*

the sole exception of Escorial, MSS 1.1.6 (ca. 1260) and 1.1.8 (ca. 1375–1400)—both derived from an Alfonsine version of the Vulgate—these manuscripts were all copied in the fifteenth century and translated from Hebrew instead of Latin. However, each of these particular renditions reveals a greater or lesser fidelity to the Hebrew Bible, so that “the paucity of extant manuscripts is balanced by the diversity of those that survived.”² This textual heterogeneity contrasts with the relative homogeneity of these Bibles’ presumed audience, since most of these manuscripts seem to have been intended for the edification and delight of aristocratic patrons, a close-knit community linked by family ties and common interests.³

That was case of the so-called *Biblia de Alba/Arragel* (Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio de Liria), produced ca. 1422–35 at the request of the Grand Master of Calatrava, Luis de Guzmán, and whose intricate creative process has been possible to reconstruct in detail.⁴ Although not so well attested by the

and Performance in Western Christianity, ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 315–37. Concerning the inquisitorial prohibitions, see Jesús Enciso, “Prohibiciones españolas de las versiones bíblicas romances antes del Tridentino,” *Estudios Bíblicos* 3 (1944): 523–60; and Sergio Fernández López, *Lectura y prohibición de la Biblia en lengua vulgar: Defensores y detractores* (León: Universidad de León, 2003). Albeit diverse in their focus and purpose, the websites *Biblia Medieval* (<http://www.bibliamedieval.es/>), last accessed April 30, 2015, and *Biblias de Sefarad* (<http://www.bne.es/es/Micrositios/Exposiciones/Biblias/>), last accessed April 24, 2015, offer an extraordinary array of materials concerning these *romanceamientos*.

² Francomano, “Castilian Vernacular Bibles,” 319. In addition to the works included in n. 2 see, most specifically, F. Javier Pueyo Mena and Andrés Enrique-Arias, “Los romanceamientos castellanos de la Biblia hebrea compuestos en la Edad Media: Manuscritos y traducciones,” *Sefarad* 73, no. 1 (2013): 165–224 (with further bibliographic references).

³ On the literary patronage of late-medieval Castilian nobility, see Gemma Avenoza “Traducciones, público y mecenazgo en Castilla,” *Romania* 128 (2011): 205–21; and Joaquín Yarza Luaces, *La nobleza ante el rey. Los grandes linajes castellanos y el arte en el siglo XV* (Madrid: Fundación Iberdrola, 2002), 273–307; “La nobleza hispana y los libros iluminados (1400–1470): Corona de Castilla,” in *La memoria de los libros: Estudios la historia del libro y de la lectura en Europa y América*, ed. Pedro M. Cátedra and María Luisa López-Vidriero (Madrid: Instituto del Libro y la Lectura, 2004), 17–66.

⁴ See Moshe Lazar, “Rabbí Moses Arragel as Servant of Two Masters: A Call for Tolerance in a Century of Turmoil,” in *Encuentros and Desencuentros: Spanish Jewish Cultural Interaction Throughout History*, ed. Avivah Doron et al. (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Services, 2000), 431–78; Sonia Fellous, *Histoire de la Bible de Moïse Arragel: Quand un rabbin interprète la Bible pour les chrétiens* (Paris: Somogy Éditions, 2001); Eleazar Gutwirth, “Rabbi Mose Arragel and the Art of the Prologue in Fifteenth Century Castile,” *Biblias Hispanas* 2 (2013): 83–101; Carlos Sáinz de la Maza, “Poder político y poder doctrinal en la creación de la Biblia de Alba,” *e-Spania* 3 (2007), last accessed April 17, 2015. <http://e-spania.revues.org/116>; Ángel Sáenz-Badillos, “Luis de Guzmán’s Patronage and the Spanish Translation and Commentary of the

documentary record, Madrid, BNE, MS 10288 has been identified as part of a Bible commissioned by the Marquis of Santillana at the beginning of the century, while Escorial, MS I.I.4 (ca. 1460–80) has been recently attributed to the patronage of María de Luna, wife of Diego López Pacheco, 2nd Marquis of Villena.⁵ No doubt, the privileged position of their original owners may explain the survival of these vernacular translations, since only “universities, monasteries and nobles free of any suspicion had license for possessing, and reading them.”⁶ The large format and careful arrangement of the remaining manuscripts suggest that these Bibles might also have originally belonged to aristocratic libraries and been scattered during that difficult period, only to have lately resurfaced in San Lorenzo del Escorial (MSS I.I.3, I.I.5, I.I.7, and I.I.19), the Biblioteca da Ajuda (MS 52-XIII-1, ca. 1425–50), the Biblioteca Pública de Évora (MS CXXIV/1–2, copied in 1429), and the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid (Cod. 87, ca. 1422–30).⁷

Of these, more than half are accompanied by images, although the sort of visual narrative displayed in each also varies, from the unsystematic iconographic selection in Escorial, MSS I.I.4, I.I.5, and I.I.7 to the subtle interplay of text and images in the famous Arragel Bible.⁸ Strikingly enough, despite the

Bible by Arragel,” in *Patronage, Production, and Transmission of Texts in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Cultures*, ed. Esperanza Alfonso and Jonathan Decter (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 361–83.

⁵ See Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 53–78 (analysis of the manuscript) and 421–24 (study of the heraldry by José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Melero). Cf. Yarza, “La nobleza hispana,” 36–38.

⁶ “[S]iempre se tuuo miramiento à los colegios, y monesterios, y à las personas nobles que estauan fuera de sospecha, y seles dava licencia, que las tuuiessen, y leyessen;” Bartolomé Carranza, *Comentarios sobre el catechismo cristiano* (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1558), fol. Vr.

⁷ The thirteenth item in this list of romance Bibles is the recently identified Bodleian, MS Canon. Ital. 177. This humble manuscript (early fifteenth c.) preserves a translation from Hebrew of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel 1–2, and Kings 1–2 (incomplete). See Juan Carlos Conde, “A Neglected Old Spanish Biblical Translation: The Biblia de Alfonso Ximénez,” in *Text, Manuscript, and Print in Medieval and Modern Iberia: Studies in Honour of David Hook*, ed. Barry Taylor, Geoffrey West, and Jane Whetnall (New York: The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 2013), 88–117.

⁸ Escorial MS I.I.4 seems to have been fragmentarily illustrated by two artists—not even as part of the same creative attempt—with aesthetic concerns of their own. Whereas the first of them chose the well-known episode of the sacrifice of Isaac, the second depicted the obscure story of Dinah, Jacob’s daughter. Differences in the system of illustration selected in each case—a sequence of three miniatures vs. a continuous narrative—should also be noted, although both sets of illustrations were added in the lower margins of the page some decades after the Bible was copied, by miniaturists related to the Segovian artist Juan de Carrión. In Escorial MS I.I.7, only four unrelated miniatures were included into the

wealth of research that has been done—and is being done—on the *Biblias romanceadas*, a systematic survey of the pictorial cycles found in these manuscripts is still lacking.⁹ However, as I will try to argue, some of the features that make the illustrations in these Castilian vernacular Bibles seem so singular today are not so anomalous when examined as a whole and even less so in light of previous Latin and vernacular versions of biblical or para-biblical texts illustrated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Yet, more often than not, academic parcellation has turned these manuscripts into fragmentary and incoherent realities, further isolating them from the complex visual culture they belonged to. As a case in point, considerable attention has been paid to the miniatures in the Arragel Bible, although seemingly only inasmuch as these images are linked to rabbinic traditions.¹⁰ On the other hand, the

books of Genesis and Exodus: Noah and his daughters, the destruction of Sodom, Moses and the burning bush, and the miracle of the water from the rock. In a different vein, the anonymous artist in charge of illustrating Escorial MS 1.1.5 preferred to focus on the story of Job, leaving the remaining text devoid of any narrative images. Only the figures of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were included, together with a miniature of Christ in Majesty surrounded by angels. This feature is even more remarkable since Escorial MSS 1.1.5 and 1.1.7 might have been produced by the same workshop. See, in general, Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "La ilustración del Antiguo Testamento en la última Edad Media española," in *La Biblia en el Arte y en la Literatura. V Simposio Bíblico Español*, ed. Vicente Balaguer and Vicente Collado, 2 vols. (Valencia: Fundación Bíblica Española; Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1999), 2:31–80; and the descriptions of these manuscripts offered in Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 71–77, 104–8 and 122–30.

- 9 Although valuable, the descriptions of these pictorial cycles included by Avenoza in her *Biblias castellanas medievales* do not address the problematical issues posed by their disparity. For a deeper art-historical analysis, see Yarza Luaces, "La ilustración del Antiguo Testamento." I have only been able to consult a summary of the unpublished PhD thesis by María Mendigaña Urbina García, "La ilustración de la biblia gótica en Castilla: Las biblias romanceadas, siglos XIII al XV" (Universidad del País Vasco, 2003).
- 10 There is a facsimile edition under the direction of Jeremy Schonfeld, *La Biblia de Alba: An Illustrated Manuscript Bible in Castilian, by Rabbi Moses Arragel*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Amigos de Sefarad, 1992). On its miniatures, see Carl Otto Nordström, *The Duke of Alba Castilian Bible: A Study of the Rabbinical Features of the Miniatures* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1967); Sonia Fellous, "La Biblia de Alba: L'iconographie ambiguë," in *Creencias y culturas. Cristianos, judíos y musulmanes en la España medieval*, ed. Carlos Carrete Parrondo and Alisa Meyuhas Ginio (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca; Tel-Aviv: Universidad de Tel-Aviv, 1998), 41–96; and Marcia Kupfer, "Abraham Circumcises Himself: A Scene at the Endgame of Jewish Utility to Christian Art," in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 143–82. See also the works mentioned in n. 4.

leading role played by the Bible commissioned by the Master of Calatrava has not only consigned other works to oblivion but has also led to an asymmetry in the evaluation of the remaining Romance Bibles, since the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the creation of this manuscript had neither precedents nor sequels.

Thus, as part of a more ambitious project, focused on the study of Bible illustration in fifteenth-century Castile, I would like to present here an introduction to the study of Escorial MS 1.1.3 in the hope of redressing the imbalance and contributing to a better understanding of the multifaceted phenomena lying behind the production and reception of the fifteenth-century illustrated *Biblias romanceadas*. My decision to select this particular manuscript was prompted not only by its extraordinary pictorial cycle—second to the Arragel Bible alone in length and quality—but also by the debate about its date, filiation and intended audience. It is my contention that such a complex artifact as the Escorial Bible, whose study has led sometimes to contradictory inferences by scholars with different backgrounds and expertise, should be approached from diverse perspectives in a sort of cumulative inquiry. For that reason, the three parts in which this article is divided have a distinctive focus and nature: the first of them deals with issues of chronology and patronage, the second delves into the analysis of the subtle relation between historiographical account and theological exegesis conveyed by its miniatures, while the final section tries to disclose the trace left by contemporary events in its unusual Old Testament narrative.

Escrírial 1.1.3: Romancing the Bible in Fifteenth-Century Castile

Escrírial 1.1.3 (hereafter *E3*) is an extraordinary work by any measure. This huge codex (420 × 290 mm) preserves one of the longest pictorial cycles among fifteenth-century Castilian Bibles and, in general, among late medieval Iberian illuminated manuscripts (Figure 5.1). Copied on mixed gatherings of parchment and paper, it is written in two columns as was customary for biblical and historiographical works. The miniatures, framed, are inserted in the main body of the text.¹¹ Due to its sumptuous appearance—a truly “royal Bible” as

¹¹ The codex has I + 545 + I fols. For a codicological description, see Julián Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial* (Madrid: Imprenta Helénica, 1924–29), 2:9–16; and Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 136–38. Cf. the description—BETA manid 1480—in the database *Philobiblion*, last accessed on April 21, 2015. <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/philobiblon/index.html>.



FIGURE 5.1 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 1r). © Patrimonio Nacional.

Gemma Avenoza terms it—it could be deemed worthy of a king.¹² And in fact it was, since the inclusion of the *infante* Philip's coat of arms in the binding clearly attests that *E3* belonged to his personal library.¹³ Of course, the future king of Spain was not its first owner, and neither was the noblewoman María de Mendoza (1508–87), whose coat of arms was included on fol. 1.¹⁴

Although its sixty-five miniatures should have granted it a place of honor in the history of medieval Iberian illumination, no monographic analysis has ever been attempted of its visual narrative, since most of the previous art-history scholarship about it has focused on stylistic issues.¹⁵ Conversely, the text it contains is what has attracted most scholarly interest by far.¹⁶ Being the closest textual witness to traditional Sephardic translation procedures—such as the consistent use of the same Romance equivalent for each Hebrew root—*E3* occupies a remarkable place in the general *stemma* of Castilian Bible translations (Table 5.1).

¹² See Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 131.

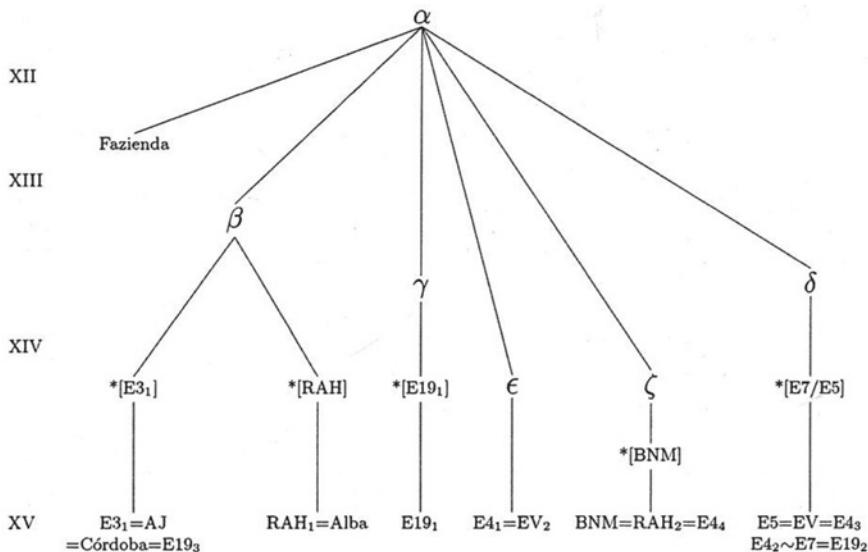
¹³ José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Melero, *La librería rica de Felipe II. Estudio histórico y catalogación* (Madrid: Ediciones Escurialenses, 1998), 251–52. According to his research, this new binding would have been produced by Juan Vázquez in Salamanca, between January 1543 and July of that same year.

¹⁴ The original arms were cut and this new piece of parchment pasted over. According with Gonzalo Sánchez-Melero, *La librería rica*, 251–52, María de Mendoza would have presented the Bible to the *infante* Philip as a present. It should be noted that this lady was married to Francisco de los Cobos, Secretary of State and *Comendador* of Castile under the reign of Emperor Charles v. Their son, Diego, was educated with the future Philip ii.

¹⁵ See Diego Angulo, "Miniaturas del segundo cuarto del siglo xv (Biblia romanceada 1.1.3 de la Biblioteca de El Escorial)," *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología* 15 (1929): 225–31 + 14 plates; Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, "Dos Biblias iluminadas en Toledo en torno a 1420. La Biblia de Alba y la 'Biblia romanceada escurialense' (Escorial, Ms. 1.j.3)," in *Flanders in a European Perspective: Manuscript Illumination around 1400 in Flanders and Abroad (Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven 7–10 sept. 1993)*, ed. Bert Cardon and Maurits Smeyers (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 473–85; and Rosario Marchena Hidalgo, "Nicolás Gómez iluminador de los libros de Isabel la Católica," *Laboratorio de arte* 19 (2006): 31–48. More or less accurate inventories of the illustrations in *E3* can be found in Samuel Berger, "Des manuscrits de la Bible castillane enluminés en Espagne sous la direction des Juifs," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* s.n. (1898): 239–44, esp. 240–41; Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos*, 3:437–440; Angulo, "Miniaturas," 230–31; Moshe Lazar, ed., *Biblia Ladinada. Escorial I.J.3: Critical Edition, Notes and Commentaries* (Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1995), 1:lii–lvi; Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 141–43. Some of these miniatures were also summarily described in Rodrigo de Castro, *Bibliotheca Española* (Madrid: Imprenta Real de la Gazeta, 1781), 1:433.

¹⁶ The text was edited by Lazar, *Biblia Ladinada*. His transcription is now available in *Biblia Medieval*.

TABLE 5.1 *Bible translations from Hebrew. After F.J. Pueyo, "Biblias romanceadas y en ladino," in Sefardíes: Literatura y lengua de una nación dispersa (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2008), 261*



This closeness is manifest not only in the proximity of the putative archetype of *E*₃ to the most archaic *romanceamiento*, now lost, but also in its fidelity to the Hebrew canon regarding the selection and order of the biblical books. Besides, the arrangement of the Pentateuch for liturgical use, with the division of the text into *parashot*, and the peculiar layout devised for some poetic passages, such as Exod. 15:1–21 (Song of Moses and Miriam) and Num. 21:18 (Well song), attest that the imitation of the Hebrew text—to the point of evoking its appearance on the page—was considered as an integral part of the translation process.¹⁷ These features have led Moshe Lazar to use the label *Biblia ladinada* instead of *romanceada* in his edition of *E*₃ in order to emphasize its reliance on Jewish biblical traditions, although there is scant evidence that the extant

¹⁷ The same procedure has been followed in Escorial, MS I.1.19, fol. 75v. Margherita Morreale, "Vernacular Scriptures in Spain," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 465–91 and 533–35, esp. 469. See also, Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 83–84.

Romance Bibles from this period, and much less this particular copy, were intended for a Jewish audience.¹⁸

In fact, other aspects of the Escorial Bible can be brought into discussion in order to reassess its role both within the manuscript tradition of the *biblias romanceadas* and *vis-à-vis* the Hebrew Bible. It should be noted that *E3* and the *romanceamiento* held at the Biblioteca da Ajuda (MS 52-XIII-1) preserve essentially the same biblical translation, as was first pointed out by Gerhard Moldenhauer and Margherita Morreale and has been further confirmed by Lazar and F. Javier Pueyo.¹⁹ In both cases, the deuterocanonical books of the Bible have been appended with some version of the Maccabees, a vernacular translation from the *Vulgata* in *E3* and a Romance version of the Aramaic *Megillat Antiochus* in Ajuda.²⁰ But *E3* and Ajuda stand apart among the group of *biblias romanceadas* not only in textual terms but also because of the large, framed miniatures that are inserted into the main body of the text in both manuscripts. Moreover, even though their visual narratives differ in length and content, some biblical episodes were depicted in both manuscripts, as Avenoza has already shown.²¹

Paradoxically, Ajuda reveals only a minor trace of midrashic elements and few details akin to those in illustrated haggadot, unlike the Arragel Bible and as might be expected in manuscripts preserving an almost word-by-word translation of the Hebrew text.²² None of them are present in *E3*, though. In this regard, and as a salutary caveat against easy assumptions and compartmental-

¹⁸ Pueyo and Enrique-Arias, "Los romanceamientos castellanos," 202–05.

¹⁹ See Gerhard Moldenhauer, "Contribución al catálogo de manuscritos españoles existentes en bibliotecas portuguesas," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* 49 (1928): 49–84; Morreale, "Vernacular scriptures," 466. Cf. Lazar, *Biblia Ladinada*, 1xxii–xxvi and xxxix–xl; Pueyo, "Biblias romanceadas y en ladino," 206–08.

²⁰ Avenoza, *La Biblia de Ajuda*, 115–55; "Versiones medievales de los Macabeos: San Jerónimo, Josefo y la *Megil·lat Antiochus*," in *Actas VIII Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval* (Santander, 1998), ed. Margarita Freixas, Silvia Iriso, and Laura Fernández (Santander: AHLM, Gobierno de Cantabria, 2000), 245–56; and, above all, the ground-breaking study by María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, "La dinastía de los Macabeos en Josefo y en la literatura española," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 48 (1971): 289–97.

²¹ Avenoza, *La Biblia de Ajuda*, 120–21.

²² Avenoza, *La Biblia de Ajuda*, 54–63. Some small iconographic details in the depiction of Moses and the burning bush and the crossing of the Red Sea in Ajuda, though, may go back to Jewish prototypes and would have been targeted to a converso readership, according to Tiago Moita, "Entre os Judeus Portuguezes e Espanhoes corriaõ algumas Traducções: A Bíblia da Ajuda, um manuscrito en romance de iniciativa judaica," *Invenire* special issue (2015): 64–71.

ized views, it should also be noted that what we perceive now as a contrast between this fidelity to the Hebrew text and the inclusion of a whole section from the Latin Vulgate seems not to have been problematic for the audience of *E3*, since this extraordinary work was the product of a unified project. As such, all miniatures were made as part of a common decorative program.²³

According to Rosario Marchena Hidalgo, author of the most recent monographic study on the miniatures in *E3*, these were the work of a team of artists. The most talented of them was in charge of part of Exodus up to the end of the book of Esther (Figures 5.1–5.7), plus the historiated initial on fol. 1r and the exuberant vegetal full border enclosing the text.²⁴ A second artist illustrated the beginning of the manuscript (Figure 5.8), whereas a less skillful painter was assigned to the last section, from the book of Daniel onwards (Figure 5.9). Despite that, the structural and conceptual divide between Maccabees and the rest of the books would still have been noticeable to readers due to the uneven proportion of pictures in each section (Table 5.2). Nineteen miniatures were created for the Books of the Maccabees, while only forty-five are found in the remaining 490 folios. Besides, the size and shape of the miniatures as well as the rules governing their insertion into the text vary in both sections, an indication of the existence of two pictorial models whose differences no one cared to eliminate.²⁵ Thus, the Maccabees section opens with a figurative frontispiece—the rebuilding of the Temple (fol. 491v)—unrelated to the adjacent text, whereas the following illustrations are always placed at the end of the chapter they allude to. Conversely, miniatures corresponding to the Hebrew canon are inserted just after the precise textual passage they illustrate, like the pictures in early medieval Christian Bibles illuminated in the Iberian Peninsula, such as the famous *Bible of 960* made for Saint Isidore in León or the treasure of the Real Academia de la Historia, a codex attributed to San Millán de la Cogolla by John Williams.²⁶ Although Joaquín Yarza has called attention

²³ Changes in scribal hand do not correspond to major structural divides either. On the other hand, parallels for this kind of watercolor miniatures highlighted throughout by touches of gold leaf can be found in other fifteenth-century illustrated books such as the *Castigos del rey don Sancho* (Madrid, BNE, MS 3995), the *Décadas de Tito Livio* translated by the Count of Benavente (Madrid, BNE, MS Res. 204), or the fragmentary *Tristán de Leonís* (Madrid, BNE, MSS 20262/19 and 22644/1–22644/40–51).

²⁴ Marchena Hidalgo, “Nicolás Gómez iluminador de los libros,” 37–40.

²⁵ Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 140–45.

²⁶ On the “papyrus style” of book illustration, see John Williams, “The Bible in Spain,” in *Imagining the Early Medieval Bible*, ed. John Williams (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 179–218, esp. 180 and 208. See also, by the same author, “A Castilian Tradition of Bible Illustration: The Romanesque Bible from San Millán,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 66–85.



FIGURE 5.2 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 56v). Moses and the tablets of the Law. © Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.3 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 89v). The spies from Canaan. © Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.4 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, 1.1.3, fol. 92v). Death of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. © Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.5 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, 1.1.3, fol. 172v). Death of Saul. © Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.6 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 464v). Esther and Ahasuerus.
© Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.7 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 466r). Death of Haman.
© Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.8 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 17v). Jacob's dream. © Patrimonio Nacional.



FIGURE 5.9 *Biblia romanceada* (Escorial, I.I.3, fol. 496v). Judas Maccabeus defeats Lysias. © Patrimonio Nacional.

TABLE 5.2 *List of illustrations in E3*

Genesis	11 miniatures	Fols. 1ra (initial), 2v, 3r, 5v, 6r, 11v, 13r, 17v, 21r, 24r, 29v, 32r.
Exodus	9 miniatures	Fols. 34r, 35r, 36r, 39v, 40r, 43r, 45v, 54v, 56v.
Numbers	6 miniatures	Fols. 88v, 89v, 91v, 92v, 96v, 98r.
Joshua	2 miniatures	Fols. 127v, 131r.
Judges	1 miniature	Fol. 149v
1 Samuel	3 miniatures	Fols. 164r, 172v, 184v.
2 Kings	5 miniatures	Fols. 211rb, 212v, 213v, 225v, 229v.
Jonah	1 miniature	Fol. 337r.
Job	1 miniature	Fol. 423r.
Esther	4 miniatures	Fols. 464v, 465v, 466r, 467r.
Daniel	2 miniatures	Fols. 470v, 473v.
1 Maccabees	13 miniatures	Fols. 491v, 493v, 496v, 497rb, 499rb, 501ra, 502rb, 503rb, 505va, 507vb, 509vb, 511rb, 514va.
2 Maccabees	6 miniatures	Fols. 515va, 518va, 521vb, 523va, 525rb, 527vb.

to the survival of this old Hispanic system of Bible illustration in *E3*, he did not pursue this point any further.²⁷

Yet any reassessment the place of *E3* among the Castilian biblical *romanceamientos* should deal with the thorny issue of this manuscript's disputed chronology and origin. In her recent book *Biblias castellanas medievales*, Gemma Avenoza contends that the Escorial codex would have been copied and illustrated in about 1425–50, that is, around the same dates as other manuscripts of this group of Romance Bible translations such as Ajuda and the lavishly decorated copy translated by Rabbi Arragel. Given the impossibility of examining the watermarks on the paper used by the scribes of *E3* due to the poor condition of the manuscript, Avenoza decided to stick to the traditional date offered by Diego Angulo in his pioneering article "Miniaturas del segundo cuarto del siglo XV" (1929), where most of the illustrations of the Escorial Bible had been attributed to the so-called "Cypresses Master," tentatively identified with the painter Pedro de Toledo mentioned in the records of the cathedral of Seville ca. 1434.²⁸ Angulo ascribed to this artist not only many of the choir

²⁷ Yarza Luaces, "La ilustración del Antiguo Testamento," 39.

²⁸ According to Zarco (*Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos*, 2:10) the watermarks would be "two circles with horizontal diameters and a bell." This motif is so common

books made for the chapter but also the decoration of the Hieronymite monastery of San Isidoro del Campo in nearby Santiponce, although this premise has been subjected to criticism in recent decades with the publication of new books and articles that have substantially refined our knowledge of the workshops that flourished in fifteenth-century Seville.²⁹

In the end, even the late Angulo had grown increasingly skeptical about his own hypothesis leaving room in his last writings for the re-attribution of the miniatures in *E3* and several Sevillian choir books to a different artist, Nicolás Gómez. Following this trend, Rosario Marchena Hidalgo has argued for re-dating these works to the last decades of the fifteenth century.³⁰ Her work deserves credit for the exhaustive tracking of the sustained documented activity of Nicolás Gómez in the Sevillian cathedral (1454–1501) and for the cogent formalistic analysis of the works attributed to this miniaturist, including several of the aforementioned paintings at San Isidoro del Campo, although I differ from her conclusions for what regards to the latter.³¹ After personal inspection

in the fifteenth century that it is of hardly any help for dating purposes. Cf. “char à deux roués,” in *Briquet on line*, last accessed on May 21, 2015. http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/_scripts/php/BR.php.

²⁹ See Angulo, “Miniaturas” and “La miniatura en Sevilla: El Maestro de los Cipreses (1434),” *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología* 4 (1928): 65–96; Claudio Boutelou, “Pinturas murales en el Monasterio de San Isidoro del Campo,” *Museo Español de Antigüedades* 2 (1873): 47–58; Chandler R. Post, *A History of Spanish Painting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930–66), 3:318–26 and figs. 364–65; see also, 79–95; and, above all, Pedro J. Respaldiza Lama, “Las pinturas murales,” in *San Isidoro del Campo (1301–2002): Fortaleza de la espiritualidad y santuario de poder* (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, 2002), 70–115; Carmen Rallo Gruss, *Aportaciones a la técnica y estilística de la pintura mural en Castilla a final de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1999), 2:503–42. See also Teresa Laguna Paúl, “Pedro de Toledo y la iluminación de un misal sevillano del siglo XV,” *Laboratorio de arte* 6 (1993): 27–66; “Consideraciones sobre la miniatura sevillana del s. XV,” in Cardon and Smeyers, *Flanders in a European Perspective*, 673–91.

³⁰ Marchena Hidalgo, *Nicolás Gómez: Miniaturista, pintor e ilustrador de libros del siglo XV* (Sevilla: Diputación de Sevilla, 2007), 33–54. For the traditional attribution, see Barbara C. Anderson, “A Fifteenth-Century Illumination and the Work of Pedro de Toledo,” *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 21 (1993): 11–28. Rosario Marchena’s hypothesis has been accepted nonetheless by Fernando Villaseñor Sebastián, *El libro iluminado en Castilla durante la segunda mitad del siglo XV* (Segovia: Instituto Castellano y Leonés de la Lengua, 2009), 218–25. Cf. Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 132.

³¹ Marchena Hidalgo, *Nicolás Gómez*, 79–95. Cf. Respaldiza Lama, “Las pinturas” and “Pinturas murales del siglo XV en el monasterio de San Isidoro del Campo,” *Laboratorio de arte* 11 (1998): 69–99; Rallo Gruss, *Aportaciones*, 2:541–42, who disagree with Marchena on matters of attribution. Although the monastery had been originally bequeathed to the

of the Santiponce ensemble, I am persuaded that the monumental depiction of the Last Supper (2.75×5 m) designed for the northern wall of the refectory (Figure 5.10) is the only element in the decoration that can be attributed with certainty to Nicolás Gómez, due to its close formal kinship with the miniatures both in *E3* and with some choir books in the archive of Seville's cathedral for which positive documentary evidence exists. Most remarkable for the accurate dating of the Escorial Bible, the cycle of the life of Saint Hieronymus in the sacristy (Figure 5.11) and the paintings in the refectory have been related to the patronage of the 2nd Duke of Medina Sidonia—Enrique Pérez de Guzmán, grandson of his homonymous ancestor—and his wife, Leonor de Ribera y Mendoza, whose coats of arms are prominently displayed there. As a consequence, it is possible to reliably establish a date range for these paintings—and perhaps for *E3* as well—between 1463, when their marriage took place, and 1492, the year of Guzmán's death.³²

Joaquín Yarza had already advanced that a member of the Guzmán family could have commissioned *E3* due to the stylistic affinities detected between the Escorial Bible and the frescoes in San Isidoro del Campo.³³ Nevertheless, since he still adhered to an early chronology for both the manuscript and the wall paintings, he preferred to attribute the commission of the manuscript to Juan Alonso de Guzmán (1410–68) or some other member of the family around the first half of the century. I would rather suggest that the 2nd Duke of Medina Sidonia would be the perfect candidate, as the documented patron of Nicolás Gómez and the richest aristocrat of the region.³⁴ Such an attribution seems far more plausible than Marchena Hidalgo's conjecture that this *romanceamiento* might have been copied and illustrated at the request of Queen Isabella herself. It is true that *E3* was recognized by Elisa Ruiz among the items described in the inventory of the books kept at the Alcázar in Segovia in 1503 and that there is documentary evidence of at least one book made for the queen for

Cistercians in 1301 by its founders, Alonso Pérez de Guzmán el Bueno and María Alonso Coronel, it was transferred in 1431 to the then recently created Hieronymite Order by Enrique Pérez de Guzmán, 2nd Count of Niebla (d. 1436). From that time onwards, several pictorial campaigns were commissioned by different members of the same family until the beginning of the sixteenth century.

³² The patronage of the duke and his wife had already been acknowledged by Justino Matute y Gaviria, *Bosquejo de Itálica* (Seville: Mariano Caro, 1827), 167.

³³ Yarza Luaces, *La nobleza ante el rey*, 281–82.

³⁴ See Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Andalucía en el siglo XV. Estudios de historia política* (Madrid: CSIC, 1973).



FIGURE 5.10 Nicolás Gómez, *Last Supper*. Santiponce, Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo. Photo: author.



FIGURE 5.11 *Jerome and his assistants*. Sacristy of the Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, Santiponce. Photo: author.

which Nicolás Gómez was paid in 1487.³⁵ But, however sensible these conclusions might appear, the extremely imprecise information provided by both documents hardly qualifies them as definitive proof of the queen's having commissioned the work.³⁶

Conversely, ascribing *E3* to a commission from Enrique de Guzmán and Leonor de Ribera opens new avenues for research about the patronage of these illustrated *romanceamientos*, since none other than Luis de Guzmán—the Master of Calatrava who had entrusted Moshe Arragel with the task of translating and commenting the Bible—was also a member of this family. Another distant relative, Alfonso de Guzmán, Lord of Lepe, La Redondela y Ayamonte, had commissioned two Franciscans with the translation of Nicholas of Lyre's *Postillae* around 1420.³⁷ This popular text was also copied and illustrated in its original Latin version for Per Afán de Ribera, 2nd *Adelantado* of Andalucía and Enrique de Guzman's father-in-law.³⁸ As a matter of fact, several copies of Nicholas of Lyre's work circulated in Seville in the first half of the fifteenth century—treasured by these noble families and by the cathedral chapter

35 Even if there is documentary record of only one book made for her by Nicolás Gómez in 1487, it must have not been the only royal commission entrusted to him, since the Sevillian painter presented himself as "ylluminador de las obras de los Reyes nuestros señores" in another document preserved at the city council archives. José Gestoso y Pérez, *Ensayo de un diccionario de los artífices que florecieron en Sevilla desde el siglo XIII and XVIII inclusive* (Sevilla: La Andalucía Moderna, 1899), 1:318–19. On the 1503 inventory, see Elisa Ruiz García, *Los libros de Isabel la Católica. Arqueología de un patrimonio escrito* (Madrid: Instituto de Historia del Libro y la Lectura, 2004), 405.

36 "[84] Otro libro de marca mayor, en pergamino y papel, de mano, en rromançé, que es una parte de la *Brivia*, y en la primera letra tiene un Dios Padre pintado, con las coberturas de cuero colorado, con unas cerraduras y cinco bollones de latón en cada tabla." Ruiz García, *Los libros de Isabel la Católica*, 296. As Diego Angulo and Joaquín Yarza contend, it is highly disputable to assimilate the representation of the Creation of Eve to the depiction of God the Father, all the more so when many other *biblias romanceadas* are known to have existed at that time. See Angulo, "Miniaturas," 2; Yarza Luaces, "La ilustración del Antiguo Testamento," 39.

37 Salamanca, Biblioteca de la Universidad, MS 2253. See Klaus Reinhardt and Horacio Santiago-Otero, *Biblioteca bíblica ibérica medieval* (Madrid: CSIC, 1986), 92. Alfonso de Guzmán was the brother of the second Count of Niebla, Enrique de Guzmán.

38 Seville, Biblioteca de la Universidad, MS 332–147. See Teresa Laguna Patú, *Postillae in Vetus and Novum Testamentum de Nicholas de Lyre* (Sevilla: Universidad, 1979), and Felipe Pereda, "Le origine dell'architettura cubica. Alfonso de Madrigal, Nicola da Lira e la querelle salomonista nella Spagna del Quattrocento," *Annali di Architectura* 17 (2005): 21–52, esp. 34–35.

alike—due to a renewed interest in the Old Testament and, most specifically, in the reconstruction of the Temple offered in the *Postillae*.³⁹

The production of richly illuminated Bibles in the vernacular as well as illustrated copies of Nicholas of Lyre under the auspices of members of a same family may be regarded as an expression of a shared concern about the interpretation *ad litteram* of Scripture.⁴⁰ It should be noted that both the pursuit of an accurate biblical text—going back to the Hebrew Bible if necessary—and the minute explanation of selected passages from the Old Testament would have aided audiences in penetrating the complex meaning of the sacred text. Hence the importance also accorded to images in these works, whether the comprehensive architectonic designs included in the *Postillae* or the amplified visual narrative in the Arragel Bible and *E3*, which may have contributed to make the deeds of the people of Israel present for fifteenth-century readers. It is hardly accidental, then, that both *romanceamientos* and copies of Lyre's *Postillae* can be found in some of the most notable aristocratic libraries of Andalucía at the end of the Middle Ages and the early modern period. Although nothing is known for certain about the library of Enrique de Guzmán, it seems likely that a substantial part of his manuscripts were inherited by his son Juan Alonso together with the *mayorazgo*.⁴¹ In fact, Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada and María Concepción Quintanilla Raso have tentatively identified some of the titles mentioned in the inventory of the 3rd Duke of Medina Sidonia (1507) as items coming from his father's book collection.⁴² There is no trace of *E3* in this document, although several biblical and para-biblical texts were included there, such as some “biblical concordances” (no. 56), a “Latin Bible in four volumes” (nos. 69–72), two more Bibles of smaller size (nos. 155 and 202), and, more interestingly, a copy of “the Gospels in the vernacular” (no. 126) together

39 It could indeed have inspired the design of the new cathedral and its unusual eastern end. Pereda, “Le origine dell'architettura cubica,” 35–38.

40 Pereda, “Le origine dell'architettura cubica,” 27–33. Stefania Pastore, *Una herejía española. Conversos, alumbrados e Inquisición* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2010), 51–61.

41 I have not been able to consult his last will preserved at the archive of the Fundación Casa Ducal Medina Sidonia in Sanlúcar de Barrameda (AGFCMS, Leg. 1000, fols. 35v and ff.). However, Prof. Antonio Urquízar has very kindly shared his partial transcription of this document with me. The only precise indication stated by the duke in his last will concerns his burial in San Isidoro del Campo and the carving of a sculpted tomb like that of his father (“mi bulto encima de mi sepultura de la manera que el duque mi señor mandó que se hiciese el suyo de manera que ambos se hagan de un ser y una igualdad,” fol. 36r).

42 Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada and María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, “Bibliotecas de la alta nobleza castellana en el siglo XV,” in *Livre et lecture en Espagne et en France sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Editions A.D.P.F., 1981), 47–59, esp. 52.

with two copies of Josephus' *Jewish Wars*.⁴³ Another copy of the *Evangelios en romance* is also described among the books belonging to his cousin, Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1st Marquis of Tarifa, together with three Romance vernacular translations of the Bible, one in Tuscan and two in Castilian.⁴⁴

María de Mendoza (d. 1493), daughter of the Marquis of Santillana and Countess of Los Molares, had been married to Per Afán de Ribera, 3rd *Adelantado de Andalucía*.⁴⁵ As such, she was none other than Leonor de Ribera's mother and not only Enrique de Guzmán's mother-in-law but also Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera's grandmother. Was it thanks to the Mendoza's extended network that our splendid and rare manuscript would have ended up in the hands of María de Mendoza y Sarmiento, married in 1522 to Francisco de los Cobos, secretary of Charles V and Phillip II, and one of the greatest patrons of the Spanish Renaissance? This lady and Francisco de los Cobos's prominent role at the imperial court would also account for *E3*'s presence among Phillip II's books and its final transference to the royal collections, albeit not before the king's death in 1598. By that time, this splendid manuscript had been on the verge of perishing in the fires of the Inquisition as the result of the increased prohibitions against reading the Bible in the vernacular. Only the intervention of Arias Montano and the impeccable orthodoxy of the king in the eyes of the Church made it possible to preserve this unique work, albeit secluded from curious eyes.⁴⁶

43 "38. Otro libro, espejo de velo judaico" and "61. Otro libro de Yusyfus, De Velo Judaico." Ladero Quesada and Quintanilla Raso, "Bibliotecas de la alta nobleza," 57. See also Antonio Urquízar, *Coleccionismo y nobleza. Signos de distinción social en la Andalucía del Renacimiento* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007), 130–43 and 176–207.

44 M. Carmen Álvarez Márquez, "La biblioteca de Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, I Marqués de Tarifa (1532)," *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos* 13 (1986): 1–39, esp. 10, 12–3 and 16. These works are described as follows: (no. 201) "Vna Biblia en romanç, questá en dos libros y costó dozientos ducados" (no. 3); "Vn libro grande que es la Biblia en romanç en tablas coloradas" (no. 62); "Otro libro colorado ques toscana Biblia" (no. 95).

45 About the translation of the Bible made for the Marquis of Santillana, see Pueyo and Enrique-Arias, "Los romanceamientos castellanos," 210–15. On the artistic patronage of Mencía and María de Mendoza, see Felipe Pereda, "María de Mendoza, mujer del I Condestable de Castilla. El significado del patronazgo femenino en la Castilla del siglo XV," in *Patronos y coleccionistas. Los Condestables de Castilla y el arte, ss. XV–XVII* (Valladolid: Universidad, 2005), 11–19; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "De Per Afán a Catalina de Ribera: Siglo y medio de un linaje sevillano (1371–1514)," *En la España Medieval* 4 (1984): 447–97; Ana Aranda Bernal, "Una Mendoza en la Sevilla del siglo XV: El patrocinio artístico de Catalina de Ribera," *Atrio* 10–11 (2005): 5–16.

46 In a forthcoming work I will offer further evidence about the itinerary followed by *E3* before arriving at the Escorial, revising slightly the proposition suggested by Fernández López, *Lectura y prohibición de la Biblia*, 50–71.

“Between Church and Synagogue”?

For the Inquisitors, there was always the potential danger of heresy latent in any *biblia romanceada*, and *E3* was no exception to the rule. For instance, a good deal of circumspection was required in order to deal with the translation of certain biblical passages, such as Isa. 7:14, susceptible of theological rift between Jews and Christians. In the Escorial Bible, the reference to “a virgin [who] shall conceive” had been rendered in accordance with Hebrew tradition as *manceba preñada* (fol. 233v), provoking an irate reaction in Fr. Lucas de Alaejos, who added in a marginal note: “He who erased the name virgin and put young maid was very malicious. See St. Jerome.”⁴⁷ The problematic word had been corrected well before that date, but its trace must have been still visible at the end of the sixteenth century, warning readers against any sort of deviation and reminding them about other more radical erasures operated by the Inquisition.

However, it would have been difficult to find any clear transgression of Christian dogma in the manuscript’s miniatures. With respect to the orthodoxy of *E3*’s pictorial cycle, the members of the Inquisition would have had to acknowledge the irreproachable Trinitarian overtones of the illustrations in the book of Genesis (Figure 5.8)—where the cruciform halo portrays Christ as the Creator—and approve the decorous representation of other episodes in the books of Exodus and Kings (Figure 5.3). Despite that, one cannot help being overwhelmed by the solemn monumentality and rare attention to detail of some of these miniatures. A captivated Samuel Berger described them as follows:

There is nothing conventional about these pictures. Quite to the contrary, one notes a truly unique search for truth in them, as well as a painstaking conscientiousness. Never, in the whole Middle Ages, did Christian art produce a work of this kind. If ever a medieval Jew could have worked as a painter, we would gladly recognize here the product of Israelite art.

⁴⁷ “Fue mui malicioso el que borro el nombre virgen y puso manceba. Vease S. Geronimo.” Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos*, 2:10. Alaejos was the successor of Sigüenza as librarian at the Escorial. Cf. Lazar, *Biblia ladinada*, 798–99; Francomano, “Castilian Vernacular Bibles,” 329–30. However, the analysis of the diverse *biblias romanceadas* shows that numerous passages were modified in order to make them suitable for a Christian audience. Avenoza, *La biblia de Ajuda*, 124–25.

However, the borders between Church and Synagogue were so uncertain in fifteenth-century Spain!⁴⁸

As a matter of fact, he had gone even further in a previous publication to affirm that “[in freeing these images from the Scholasticism of medieval art], the baptized Jew who devised this pictorial cycle evinced that he was truly a modern intellectual before the Renaissance.”⁴⁹ His attribution of this visual narrative to a Jew recently converted to Christianity—maybe against his will—relied precisely on the particular version of Isaiah’s prophecy contained in *E3*, discussed above.⁵⁰ Besides, he was eager to point out that some of these illustrations were the result of a careful reading of the text, unconditioned by the Christian figurative tradition. As a case in point, he justly called attention to the depiction on fol. 56v of Moses presenting the Israelites with the Tables of the Law (Figure 5.2). There, instead of the horns sanctioned by the erroneous translation of the Vulgate—*quod cornuta esset facies sua* (*Exod. 34:29*)—the viewer is invited to contemplate the haloed face of the prophet encircled by rays that would have evoked the other meaning of the Hebrew word *keren*, that is, “ray of light.”⁵¹

Other analogous examples throughout the pictorial cycle convey the impression that the illustrators not only had precise indications about the episodes to be depicted but also were asked to read attentively the corresponding passages in order to be as accurate as possible with reference to the biblical narrative. Most of these indications seem to have been lost with the cutting of the margins as a result of the rebinding of the volume, although the brevity of

⁴⁸ “Il n'y a rien de convenu dans ces tableaux; au contraire, on y remarque une recherche de la vérité réellement unique et une conscience parfaite. L'art chrétien n'a pas produit durant tout le moyen âge, une oeuvre de ce caractère. S'il était possible qu'un juif du moyen âge eût été peintre, on aimerait à voir ici un produit de l'art israélite. Mais en Espagne, au XV^e siècle, les frontières entre l'Église et la Synagogue étaient si incertaines!” Berger, “Les bibles castillanes,” 508.

⁴⁹ Berger, “Des manuscrits de la Bible castillane,” 241.

⁵⁰ “La loi de Moïse interdit aux Israélites de faire ‘aucune’ représentation des choses qui sont dans le ciels et sur la terre, ni dans les eaux plus basse que la terre’; mais cette défense ne liait plus les nombreux enfants d’Israël qui étaient entrés dans l’Église par un baptême fort peu volontaire.” Berger, “Des manuscrits de la Bible castillane,” 241.

⁵¹ Berger, “Des manuscrits de la Bible castillane,” 241. However, this was also the reading of the *E3*: “E muysen non sabia que Reluzia el cuero delas sus fazes quando fablo conel” (fol. 56va).

those that were fragmentarily preserved confirms that they would have needed to be supplemented with additional details found in the text.⁵²

Yet none of these features alone support Berger's assertion that a converso was responsible for the design of the picture cycle of *E3* and even less his insistence on the idea that this adherence to the text should be considered a specifically "Jewish" trait. To begin with, the possibility of this illustrated *biblia romanceada* being made for a New Christian audience must be discarded in light of the attribution here proposed to the patronage of Enrique de Guzmán. Concerning Nicolás Gómez's family origins or those of the other painters, nothing is known. Moreover, in the absence of the available models they may have used for the illustration of *E3*, all assumptions about their individual sensibility in the depiction of biblical subjects or about the particular tone created by the *concepteur* in the resulting work—if he was not Gómez himself, as the main artist involved—are no more than speculative.

In addition, even if it would be very tempting to associate a Bible translation from Hebrew with a supposedly "Jewish" ethics of reading, this reductionist approach could lead us into a vicious logic that would replicate the Inquisitors' method of tracing the lineages of ideas. For to relate Jews—or those reluctantly converted from Judaism—with a supposed "Jewish" way of illustrating the Bible that is more attached to a literal reading would be to unconsciously assume the charge so often leveled at them at the time *E3* was copied and illustrated: that they could only "Judaize" as the result of their "enslavement to 'Jewish' law, letter and flesh."⁵³ Individual circumstances and sensibilities were far more complex than what this limited conceptual frame allows us to imagine, and the same can be said about the range of possibilities concerning Bible illustration at the end of the Middle Ages, since the preference for the literal and historical reading of the Bible was not an exclusive legacy of Jewish people, either in Spain or in other European kingdoms at the end of the fifteenth century.

In fact, I would contend that the Escorial Bible belonged to a different figurative tradition never before considered in previous scholarship on this manuscript, that of so-called "Bible picture books," that is, vernacular translations and paraphrases of Scripture copied and illustrated for the laity throughout

⁵² The only inscription that can be transcribed with some accuracy corresponds to the episode of Balaam and the angel: "De commo (...) angel sallio al balladar (...) bilham et commo firio a su asna" (fol. 96v).

⁵³ See David Nirenberg, "Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-century Spain," *Past & Present* 174 (2002): 3–41; and "Discourses of Judaizing and Judaism in Medieval Spain," *La Corónica* 41, no. (2012): 207–33, esp. 209.

the late Middle Ages.⁵⁴ As pointed out by Christopher de Hamel, picture Bibles “[we]re not strictly Bibles but books of Bible stories ... made for the education and delight of a new class of wealthy and educated laity,” such as the 2nd Duke of Medina Sidonia.⁵⁵ A vast array of manuscripts could be labeled “Picture Bibles,” but if there is anything that defines this group of works as a whole, it would be the dominant role of images, not only because of the length of the miniature cycles but also due to the complexity of the resulting visual narratives, putting them on equal footing with text. In some of these books, such as *bibles moralisées* and *bibliae pauperum*, images were intended to shape a typological reading of the biblical text by means of associating episodes in the Old Testament with their supposed fulfillment in the New, as had been customary in illuminated Psalters.⁵⁶ In other manuscripts, though, it was the accurate depiction of the events described in Scripture—and, above all, those retold in the historical books of the Old Testament—that captured the imagination of artists and audiences, such as in the magnificent *Morgan Picture Bible* (New York, Morgan and Pierpont Library, MS 638; ca. 1250). There, the history of Israel would have been presented as a sort of mirror for contemporary rulers and nobles, avid to be portrayed as latter-day Davids or Joshuas.⁵⁷ The appeal of this alternative “secular typology” for aristocratic readers may also explain the success of picture Bibles from the mid-thirteenth century onwards and their dissemination throughout Europe. Nevertheless, some of these extraordinary works seem to have left an impression on other artistic enterprises

54 See, among others, Michael Camille, “Visualising the Vernacular: A New Cycle of Early Fourteenth-Century Bible Illustrations,” *The Burlington Magazine* 1019 (1988): 97–106; Nigel Morgan, “Old Testament Illustration in Thirteenth-Century England,” in *The Bible in the Middle Ages: Its Influence on Literature and Art* (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 149–98; Caroline S. Hull, “Rylands MS French 5: The Form and Function of a Medieval Picture Book,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 77, no. 2 (1995): 3–24; John Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Christopher de Hamel, *The Book: A History of the Bible* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 140–65; Daniel H. Weiss, *The Book of Kings: Art, War, and the Morgan Library's Medieval Picture Bible* (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum-Third Millennium Publishing, 2002).

55 Hamel, *The Book*, 142.

56 For a panoramic view, see Frank O. Büttner, *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images* (Turhout: Brepols, 2004).

57 See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Political Utility of Medieval Historiography: A Sketch,” *History and Theory* 14, no. 3 (1975): 314–25; Daniel H. Weiss, “Portraying the Past, Illuminating the Present: The Art of the Morgan Library Picture Book,” in *The Book of Kings*, 11–35; Jennifer A. Harris, “The Bible and the Meaning of History in the Middle Ages,” in *The Practice of the Bible*, 84–104.

far removed from their original sphere of circulation. The Morgan Picture Bible is a case in point, since it has been singled out as the remote source for several episodes depicted in works as dissimilar as the *Golden Haggadah* (Barcelona, ca. 1320–30) and the stone screen in Toledo's cathedral (ca. 1391–99), albeit the actual modes of transmission of these motifs remain unclear.⁵⁸

The likeness between *E3* and these picture Bibles is not due so much to the faithful replication of iconographic motifs or to compositional similarities, but to the way in which these manuscripts displayed the most noteworthy episodes in sacred history before the eyes of the readers. The prevalent *mode of representation* in manuscripts like the Morgan Picture Bible was well suited to what Richard of Saint Victor called “the simple perception of matter,” that is, the verisimilar representation of “an event, or a sequence of events, in terms of the specific locus, time, participants, action and human experience,” as defined by Madeline Caviness.⁵⁹ This category also worked as the equivalent in visual terms to the first and more basic mode of reading the Bible, the literal or historical one. It is no coincidence that the word for “illustration” in Castilian was *estoria*, which, like its equivalents *estoire* or *istoria* in other Romance languages, alludes both to the power of images to bring the past to life for the reader and to their ability to create a historiographical discourse of their own.⁶⁰

It is with this in mind that Berger's assumptions should be examined once more. The literal or historical reading created an exegetical juncture at which Christian and Jewish writers were able to reach some common ground in their interpretation of the Bible, as the interest in Nicholas of Lyre's *Postillae litteralis* attested for fifteenth-century Seville. The explicit request by Don Luis de Guzmán for a Bible provided with an up-to-date rabbinic commentary expanding on Lyre's for the understanding of the “obscure passages” of Scripture should be considered as the other side of the same coin.⁶¹ Yet literal

⁵⁸ See, respectively, Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Illuminated Haggadot from Medieval Spain: Biblical Imagery and the Passover Holiday* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 47–90 and 11–23, and Tom Nickson, “Reframing the Bible: Genesis and Exodus on Toledo's Cathedral Fourteenth-Century Choir Screen,” *Gesta* 50, no. 1 (2011): 71–89, esp. 83.

⁵⁹ Madeline H. Caviness, “‘The Simple Perception of Matter’ and the Representation of Narrative, ca. 1180–1280,” *Gesta* 30, no. 1 (1991): 48–64, esp. 49.

⁶⁰ See Brigitte Buettner, “Profane Illuminations, Secular Illusions: Manuscripts in Late Medieval Culture,” *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 1 (1992): 75–90, esp. 79–83. Thus the emphasis of the Master of Calatrava in his request for a *Biblia en rromanç, glosada e ystorizada*.

⁶¹ Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 58–9, esp. 58. On the Arragel Bible in the context of Hebraizing biblical exegesis, see Nordström, *The Duke of Alba's*, 229–332 and, above all, the works cited in note 4.

reading was also an intellectual pursuit, where the Bible study so cherished by the Hieronymites—who placed the *ruminatio* of the Scripture at the core of their religious experience—could converge with the philological zeal shown by early humanists.⁶² That, and no other, was the cultural and religious backdrop that accounts for the existence of a varied group of lavishly decorated Bible translations from Hebrew commissioned by fifteenth-century aristocratic patrons in Castile, such as Santillana, Suárez de Figueroa, and others, including Enrique de Guzmán himself. Jews and, more often, conversos were at the crossroads of this dynamic network, but they should not be considered the sole mediators in this interreligious dialogue, and even less so at the end of the century, when the spirituality of these New Christians had already permeated different layers of society.⁶³

Eloquent proof of the extent to which some of these noble readers had embraced the new spiritual trend advocating the return to Scripture can be found in the wall paintings of the sacristy of San Isidoro del Campo. There, as in the neighboring Patio de los Evangelistas, the representation of Jerome and his assistants in the act of translating the Bible (Figure 5.11) was the focus of the pictorial ensemble, although only in the former are pseudo-Hebrew characters clearly recognizable on the pages of the manuscripts handled by the monks.⁶⁴ All the saint's assistants wear either the customary habit of the Hieronymite Order or that of the observant congregation founded by Lope de Olmedo—an emphatic allusion to the familiarity of the Hieronymites with the Hebrew language—so it is safe to assume that these images had a programmatic character in their purported identification between Jerome's disciples and the members of the new order.⁶⁵ However, there may also be an oblique reference to the patrons of the monastery, Enrique de Guzmán and Leonor de Ribera, in this picture. As Pedro J. Respaldiza pointed out, the abridged visual narrative displayed in the background would have reminded viewers of two

62 See, above all, Américo Castro, *Aspectos del vivir hispánico* (Santiago de Chile: La Cruz del Sur, 1949), 55–121; Eugenio Asensio, *El Erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines. Conversos, Franciscanos, italianizantes, con algunas notas y adiciones del autor* (Salamanca: SEMYR, 2000), originally published in *Revista de Filología Española* (1952); Marcel Bataillon, “Jean d’Avila retrouvé. A propos des publications récentes de D. Luis Sala Balust,” *Bulletin Hispanique* 57, nos. 1 and 2 (1955): 5–44; Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 55.

63 A compelling analysis of this phenomenon can be found in María Laura Giordano, *Apologetas de la fe. Élites conversas entre Inquisición y patronazgo en España, ss. XV y XVI* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2004), 31–86.

64 This script reappears in the tablets of the Law held by Moses in *E3*, so closely reminiscent of a codex as to look capricious. Cf. Nickson, “Reframing the Bible,” 78–9, and fig. 10.

65 Respaldiza Lama, “Las pinturas,” 73–4 and 102–103.

wealthy Roman citizens from Italica, Lucinius and his wife Theodora, who had corresponded with Jerome about their shared interest in the study of the Scriptures.⁶⁶ Thus, the conspicuous presence of a messenger exchanging letters with the monks—presumably those sent by Lucinius and Theodora—might have evoked not only the existence of a venerable tradition of biblical studies in the area going back to the fourth century, as suggested by Respaldiza, but also the flattering idea that the monks' noble patrons were as devoted to the study of the Bible as their Roman predecessors.

Nonetheless, despite the involvement of the Duke of Medina Sidonia and his wife with the Hieronymite cause, we would be missing one of the multiple threads intertwined in the dense fabric of *E3* if we forgot that Seville had also been the place where another singular manuscript was produced well before the establishment of the Order in Santiponce. Around 1338 or 1339, a lavish work in four volumes—of which only three have been preserved—was copied and illustrated for María of Portugal, Queen of Castile (1313–57). There, all biblical excerpts from Alfonso x's universal chronicle, the *General Estoria*, were gathered in a monumental compilation of Old Testament history appended with a vernacular translation of the Gospels together with the Pauline Epistles and the Seven Canonical Epistles (Figure 5.12).⁶⁷ Although the *Estoria de la Biblia* was left unfinished, the accomplished illustrations, blank spaces, and miniatures barely outlined bear witness to the ambition of the queen, who proudly vindicated the cultural legacy of her great-great-grandfather, the “Learned King.”⁶⁸

And even if pagan history was left out of this editorial project, the resulting work was still faithful to Alfonso x's aspiration to confer upon the vernacular the same prestigious aura as Latin. The translation of the Vulgate—and maybe of the Hebrew Bible as well, if one credits the information provided by the *infante* Don Juan Manuel—might have appeared imperative to the Learned King, since Escorial, MS 1.1.6 seems to have been produced in about 1250,

66 Jack Finnegan, *Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Text Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 55. Lucinius and Theodora are mentioned in epistles 28 and 29.

67 The *Estoria de la Biblia* is partly preserved in Évora, Biblioteca Municipal, MS CXXV/2–3 and Escorial, MS 1.1.2. For a brief description of these manuscripts, see Alfonso x el Sabio, *General Estoria*, ed. Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja (Madrid: Fundación Castro, 2009), part III, vol. 1, LXXXVIII–LXXXIX; and Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos*, 2:1–9.

68 See Rosa María Rodríguez Porto, “Thesaurum: *La Crónica Troyana* de Alfonso XI (Escorial, h.I.6) y los libros iluminados de la monarquía castellana” (PhD diss., Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 2012), 2:339–453.



FIGURE 5.12 *Estoria de la Biblia* (Escorial, I.I.2, fol. 5v). Daniel in the lion's den. © Patrimonio Nacional.

before or shortly after Alfonso x's assumption of the throne.⁶⁹ So important was this task of translating the Bible into the vernacular for the king, that later in his reign he went back to the Vulgate and commissioned a second *romanceamiento* to be used in his *General Estoria*, this time notably expanded

69 According to the *infante* Don Juan Manuel, Alfonso x "fizo trasladar toda [la] ley de los judíos et aun el su Talmud et otra sciença que an los judíos muy escondida a que llaman Cabala." Don Juan Manuel, *Libro de la caza*, ed. J.M. Fradejas Rueda (Tordesillas: Instituto de Iberoamérica y Portugal, 2001), 129. He is also praised as a New Tholomeus in the *Crónica de Alfonso X*: "Et otros y mandó tornar en romançé todas las escripturas de la Bribia e todo el Eclesiástico e el arte de las naturas e de la estrología." *Crónica de Alfonso X*, ed. M. González Jiménez (Murcia: Real Academia de Alfonso x el Sabio, 1999), 26. Therefore, I disagree with the idea of designating this romance translation a "Biblia prealfonsí" solely on the basis of linguistic criteria, since Escorial MS I.I.6 seems to have been copied for Alfonso x and was certainly kept at the royal court ever since then. Cf. Andrés Enrique-Arias, ed., *La Biblia Escorial II.6: Transcripción y estudios* (San Millán de la Cogolla: CiLengua, 2010).

by the addition of commentaries and glosses intended to throw light on any grammatical and historical aspect of Scripture.⁷⁰ Both Alfonsine translations converged in the *Estoria de la Biblia*, for it was the version of the New Testament preserved in Escorial MS 1.1.6 that was appended to the biblical excerpts of the *General Estoria*. Remarkably enough, this same version of the Bible was also the source for the translation of the books of the Maccabees supplementing the deuterocanonical texts in *E3*.⁷¹ Whether knowledge of this particular text among the Sevillian aristocracy was due to the local circulation of this Alfonsine *romanceamiento* or to its dissemination among noble literate circles is hard to say.⁷² Either way, the connection between the Guzmán Bible and this time-honored tradition was a genealogical one and not merely a conceptual association.

However, it is the way in which both the *Estoria de la Biblia* and *E3* blurred the boundaries between sacred text and sacred history that would have brought them closer. By making the deeds of the people of Israel visible for these cultivated audiences, images would have contributed to the shaping of this literal interpretation of Scripture. The attentive reading of the text and its evaluation *vis-à-vis* the visual narrative would have been further encouraged in the *Estoria de la Biblia* as well as in *E3* through the arrangement of the illustrations, since each miniature was inserted next to the text it alluded to. As Michael Camille remarked, for medieval Christian audiences there was a substantial difference

⁷⁰ See María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, “La *General Estoria*: Notas literarias y filológicas (I),” *Romance Philology* 12, no. 1 (1958): 111–42; Margherita Morreale, “La *General Estoria* de Alfonso x como Biblia,” in *Actas del VII Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, ed. G. Bellini (Rome: Bulzoni, 1982), 767–73; Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja, “Biblia e historiografía,” 78–81.

⁷¹ Pueyo, “Biblias romanceadas y en ladino,” 259. However, it seems highly unlikely that the pictorial cycle that accompanies this section of *E3* harkened back to a lost Alfonsine archetype.

⁷² The first volume of this work (Gen.–Josh.) was last documented at the end of the seventeenth century in the library of the well-known bibliophile Juan Lucas Cortés in Madrid, as recorded by Nicolás Antonio, *Bibliotheca hispana vetus, sive hispanorum, qui usquam unquamve scripto aliquid consignaverunt, notitia* (Madrid: Ibarra, 1788), 2:85b. By that time, vol. II was already in Évora, whereas the remaining volumes had been transferred to El Escorial from the Alcázar de Segovia. Rodríguez Porto, “Thesaurum,” 2:356 and 394–96. The presence of a manuscript stemming from this tradition in Albelda—Escorial, 1.1.8—should not come as a surprise, since Alfonso x had asked for some valuable codices kept there in 1270. See Luis Rubio García, “En torno a la biblioteca de Alfonso x el Sabio,” en *La lengua y la literatura en tiempos de Alfonso X*, ed. Fernando Carmona and Francisco José Flores (Murcia: Universidad, 1985), 531–52, esp. 546–47. Copies of the Alfonsine translation of the Bible could have been left in exchange.

between these biblical paraphrases and translations and *the Bible*, that is, the immutable text fixed by the authorities of the Church, to be read only in Latin.⁷³ Even though these illustrated Bibles belonged to two separate domains with respect to their textual filiation and generic ascription—the *Estoria de la Biblia* belonging to the translations from the Vulgate and Alfonso x's historiographical production; *E3* always analyzed as one of the most literal *romanceamientos* of the Hebrew Bible—the use of the vernacular and the inclusion of extensive narrative pictorial cycles in both manuscripts would have moved the reading experience of their respective audiences beyond the strictly theological into the realm of education and solace.

Therefore, it is perhaps misleading to think about *E3* as the stage of any kind of religious dispute, where the supposed “Jewishness” of the text had to be nuanced or neutralized by the images, given that the manuscript was intended for a Christian audience. To be sure, the unequivocal anthropomorphic depiction of God and the possible Trinitarian emphasis of these images are an incontestable sign of their being Christian, but it would be a thorny issue to decide whether these features were conventional or, conversely, were introduced in order to forestall any possible accusation of “Judaizing.”⁷⁴

The scrutiny of some of these miniatures may reveal to what extent easy assumptions or overstatements about the meaning assigned to these iconographic elements can be misleading, as in the representation of the dream of Jacob (fol. 17v; Figure 5.8), which carefully translates into images the contents of chapter 7 of Genesis—“dela vision del escalera que vido jacob & angeles subientes & descendientes por ella” (“About Jacob's vision of a ladder with angels ascending and descending on it”). There, God appears at the top of the ladder with a crucifer nimbus blessing Jacob, who is seen lying with several stones under his head. Despite the fact that all motifs included in the picture have some correlation with the translation of the Hebrew Bible preserved in *E3*, the particular rendition of the episode would have made it consistent with a Christian reading as well.⁷⁵ Comparison with the Arragel Bible (fol. 43v)

73 Camille, “Visualising the Vernacular,” 98.

74 It would be necessary to undertake a more detailed comparison than I am able to offer here. On Moshe Arragel's reluctance to include pictures, see Fellous, “La Biblia de Alba,” 50–51, 53, and 68–70. For the polemical use of anthropomorphic images of God in the choir of Toledo's cathedral, see Nickson, “Reframing the Bible,” 78. Although I have not found any parallel or precedent, I wonder whether the inclusion of three conspicuous hills in God's globe could be meant to allude to the Trinity.

75 “E salio jacob de baersaba & fuese a aran & topo en vn logar & durmjo ay que se le puso el sol & tomo delas piedras del logar & puso asu cabesçera & echose en aquel logar & soño & ahe vn escalera parada en tierra & su cabo que llegaua alos cielos & los angeles de dios

apparently confirms this view, since neither the ladder nor God was figured there. Regarding this latter miniature, Carl Nordström even mentioned that the rare depiction of three stones under Jacob's head could have alluded to the fact that God was called God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as glossed in rabbinic commentaries.⁷⁶ Equally unusual was the representation of many more stones in *E3*, so it would be tempting to read them as an allusion to the twelve apostles, an interpretation also included in the commentary written by Moshe Arragel.⁷⁷ However, the precise meaning of these elements was not as univocal as it might look, so its identification as "Jewish" or "Christian" is highly problematical. Actually, the way in which this same episode was figured in a Historiated Bible copied and illustrated in Utrecht around the same times (The Hague, KB, MS 78 D 38, fol. 30v) invites us to approach the analysis of *E3* with due caution: there, an image of God with a crucifer nimbus was included as well, although three stones were clearly visible under Jacob's head.⁷⁸

A more polemically charged illustration, however, is that depicting the return of the spies from Canaan (Figure 5.3). As usual, these appear carrying the huge cluster of grapes, although the most striking feature in the image is the conspicuous portrayal of the two characters in the foreground as Jews. Such a portrait of the spies who were reluctant to go back to Canaan had polemical connotations, since this scene had long been understood by Christian authors as a prefiguration of the refusal of the Jews to accept the coming of the Messiah.⁷⁹ Not by chance, the bearded figure with the prominent aquiline

que subian & desçendian por ella ¶ E ahe dios que estaua sobre ella & dixo yo adonay dios de abrahan & de ysaque tu padre la tierra que tu yazes sobre ella aty la dare & atu symjente" (fol. 17vab).

⁷⁶ Nordström, *The Duke of Alba's*, 63–66. According to the Hieronymite Hernando de Talavera, the apparition of God was intended to reveal Jacob the mystery of the Incarnation. Hernando de Talavera, *Católica impugnación* (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1961), 193.

⁷⁷ "[E] a la opinión del que puso figura de 12 piedras, que son los 12 apostolos, que creyeron la trinidad e es vn solo Dios." Nordström, *The Duke of Alba's*, 65.

⁷⁸ All the miniatures have been digitized at the *Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts* database page of the KB. Relevant bibliographical references concerning this bible can also be found there. Last accessed 30 May 2015. <http://manuscripts.kb.nl/search/manuscript/extended/page/1/shelfmark/78+d+38>.

⁷⁹ Carrying the grapes was understood as a prefiguration of Christ carrying the cross. Besides, this theme also had obvious Eucharistic overtones, as in the miniature in Munich, Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm. 14159 (fol. 2v), where the bunch of grapes has been marked with a cross. See Nordström, *The Duke of Alba's*, 109. The scene was extraordinary popular in choir stalls all over Europe. In Castile, it was represented in Toledo and Oviedo. See Dorothy Krauss and Henry Krauss, *Las sillerías góticas españolas* (Madrid: Alianza, 1984), 82–83.

nose resembles that of Judas in the Last Supper in Santiponce (Figure 5.10).⁸⁰ But, without dismissing the polemical significance of these images, it would be rash to considerer this feature as the red thread behind the visual narrative or even to judge these miniatures in isolation. This same image, for instance, may have had other connotations apart from those related to Christian-Jewish polemics. As Rosario Marchena has argued, the depiction of pomegranates among the fruits brought by Joshua and Caleb, while consistent with the corresponding biblical passage, might have also worked as a visual token for the ongoing War of Granada.⁸¹ In this regard, I feel that other cues would not have passed unnoticed by a noble audience either, such as the inclusion of the Banda Real de Castilla used by the Catholic Monarchs on the shield of one of Judas Maccabeus's companions (Figure 5.9).⁸² If Marchena's supposition is correct, 1482—the date of the beginning of the War of Granada—could be set as a *terminus post quem* for *E*₃, with the death of Enrique de Guzmán in 1492 as an absolute chronological limit for the whole artistic enterprise.⁸³

Presenting the struggle of the people of Israel against its enemies in *E*₃ as a sort of prestigious counterpart for the deeds of Castilians against Granada would hardly have been remarkable, though. A similar purpose accounted for the existence of other picture Bibles such as the aforementioned *Morgan Bible*, whose undeniable Crusading accent aligns it with other Old Testament cycles like those of the windows of the Sainte-Chapelle or the Painted Chamber in Westminster, intended to present the French and English as new Chosen Peoples.⁸⁴ Those images were more than prescriptive since the relation they instituted between past and present aimed at effectually influencing contemporary events. Therefore, “[t]he examples the past offered had explanatory force in articulating the true and correct nature of present forms of political

80 In old photographs taken prior to the restoration of this work, such as that published by Marchena Hidalgo (*Nicolás Gómez*, lámina 10), the beaked nose of Judas is still visible.

81 Marchena Hidalgo, *Nicolás Gómez*, 106. The corresponding text reads as follows: “cortaron de ay vn sarmjento & vn rrazimo de vuas & leuaron lo en dos palos & delas granadas & delos figos” (fol. 88v). Due to the poor condition of the manuscript in this section, the transcription offered here is that of the equivalent passage in Ajuda.

82 Albeit with inverted colors. Cf. Alfonso Ceballos-Escalera y Gila, *La Orden de la Banda Real de Castilla* (Madrid: Prensa y Ediciones Iberoamericanas, 1993).

83 See, in general, Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Guerra de Granada, 1482–1491* (Granada: Diputación Provincial, 2001).

84 See, respectively, Daniel H. Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of St. Louis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11–77; Alyce A. Jordan, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); and Matthew Reeve, “The Painted Chamber of Westminster, Edward I and the Crusade,” *Viator* 37 (2006): 189–221.

action," as contended by Gabrielle M. Spiegel.⁸⁵ No fewer than two copies of Josephus's *De bello Judaico* were owned by Juan Alfonso de Guzmán, in addition to many other works devoted to Roman military history, corroborating the idea that history had a fundamental *exemplary* quality for these noble readers.⁸⁶

This sort of "secular typological" reading of the Bible was already a well-established practice in the thirteenth century, when many of these pictorial cycles were created, so its adoption in *E3* should not come as a surprise. What is more striking is the polemical displacement from an anti-Semitic discourse, which would be expected in a translation from Hebrew, to the consistent anti-Islamic rhetoric that lies beneath the battle scenes inserted throughout the manuscript. The enemies of Israel are invariably portrayed wearing *adargas* and brandishing a sort of scimitar (Figure 5.5), whereas this kind of "ethnic distinction" was absent from the fourteenth-century *Estoria de la Biblia*, where both Jews and Philistines or Amalekites were depicted in identical terms. This feature is even more remarkable when examined against historical evidence, since these shields were used by Nasrid and Castilian warriors alike at the end of the fifteenth century.⁸⁷ Despite that, *adargas* were also a noticeable element in the representation of Muslim armies in the reliefs of the choir stalls in Toledo's cathedral, as they had been in the *Grant estoria de Ultramar* (Madrid, BNE, MS 1187, fols. 1r and 2r), a crusading chronicle commissioned by Sancho IV of Castile in about 1292–95. Therefore, this conspicuous display of a conventional token for religious and ethnic identification may well have been intended to promote the idea of a crusade where a new Chosen People were to fight against Islam. As the descendant of famous ballad characters like Guzmán el Bueno and the Count of Niebla, Enrique de Guzmán would surely have been pleased to think of himself as a paladin cut from the same cloth as Joshua and Judas Maccabeus. If so, the contrast between the models he set for himself and his discrete military deeds during the war could not be greater, above all when compared with those of his arch-enemy, Rodrigo Ponce de León, Marquis of Arcos.

85 Spiegel, "Political utility," 316.

86 Cf. n. 43.

87 "[L]a adarga, escudo de cuero en forma bivalva adornado con grandes cordones, lejos de ser exclusiva de los musulmanes, se encuentra preferentemente en manos de cristianos." Juan de Mata Carriazo, *En la frontera de Granada* (Seville: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1971), 327.

Seville, 1480: Bible Illustration after the Inquisition

The visual narrative displayed in *E3* might have also concealed, nonetheless, a more poignant reminder for the Duke of Medina Sidonia, as I will try to argue in this sort of epilogue for both his final years and my study of the Escorial Bible. The Andalusian magnate spent most of his time secluded in his palace in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, a choice that has been regarded as an indication of his rather taciturn character. However, his star had begun to fade after the arrival of the Catholic Monarchs in Seville in 1477 and the appointment of a new *corregidor*, Diego Merlo, the trusted assistant of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was then when he relinquished control of the Alcázares and most of his influence in the town council.⁸⁸ Even though his support of the cause of the Catholic Monarchs against Juana "la Beltraneja" should have assured him royal favor, the new sovereigns were suspicious of his power and tried to strengthen royal authority by all possible means. Perhaps for that same reason, the Duke also failed in his blatant bid for the monarch's support against the Marquis of Arcos.⁸⁹ He, who had been the virtual lord of the city, seemed to have lost all interest in politics after realizing that he was no longer going to be able to profit from it.⁹⁰

One of the last occasions when Guzmán's lineage and fortune still granted him a privileged position was the baptism of the *infante* Juan on July 9, 1478. The archbishop, Pedro González de Mendoza, officiated the ceremony, while Leonor de Ribera acted as godmother of the royal child. According to the chronicler Andrés Bernáldez, the Duchess was paraded in the company of the chief members of the Sevillian aristocracy at the celebration, and the city rejoiced with the festivities that followed. Even the tensions that had surfaced during recent years between Old Christians and conversos were forgotten for a few days. However, the numerous complaints submitted to the representatives of royal power about the existence of groups of obstinate crypto-Jews in the city did not fall on deaf ears.⁹¹ Quite to the contrary, all these religious rifts

⁸⁸ Luis Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía, entendimiento y rivalidad. El proceso de construcción de la Corona española* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2005), 264.

⁸⁹ See Juan Luis Carriazo Rubio, "Isabel la Católica y el Marqués de Cádiz, o la cortesía en la representación historiográfica del poder," *e-Spania* 1 (2006), last accessed May 23, 2015. <http://e-spania.revues.org/310?lang=en#ftn50>.

⁹⁰ Cf. Alonso de Palencia, *Cuarta Década*, ed. J. López de Toro (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1974), bk. 33, chap. 2, p. 82.

⁹¹ Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997), 46–52; Juan Gil, *Los conversos y la Inquisición sevillana* (Seville: Universidad, Fundación El Monte, 2001), 1:41–92; Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the*

prompted Isabella and Ferdinand to ask Pope Sixtus IV for the extraordinary prerogative of instituting an Inquisition under royal control. The time for this idea must have been ripe, because shortly after the birth of the prince and heir, on November 1, they received a positive papal response—the bull *Exigit sincerae devotionis*.

Although it was kept secret by the sovereigns until they were sure of having struck the right chords, resistance against this new inquisitorial model was soon to appear, not only among the highest ranks of the Castilian Church, who considered the measure to be an encroachment into episcopal jurisdiction, but also, above all, among those who had been champions of the converso cause.⁹² Since the Toledan revolt of 1449 and the promulgation of the *Sentencia-Estatuto* by Pero Sarmiento, a large corpus of polemical literature against and in favor of the New Christians had appeared, and the arguments set forth by each side had circulated all over Castile.⁹³ Works such as the *Defensorium unitatis Christianae* (1449) by Alonso de Cartagena and the *Lumen ad revelationem gentium* (1467) by Alfonso de Oropesa had created “a vast arsenal of ideas, images and biblical passages that could be used by the Castilian conversos” and their supporters.⁹⁴

Among the most fervent adherents of the anti-Inquisitorial side was the Sevillian archbishop González de Mendoza, who, together with the General of the Hieronymites and confessor of the Queen, Hernando de Talavera, did his best to prevent the implementation of the new court in his see. Under these circumstances, an evangelizing campaign was launched in Seville shortly after the papal bull was issued in order to assert the efficacy of the traditional inquisitorial procedures under episcopal supervision. Not even the first trials instigated at the request of the Dominicans Juan de San Martín and Miguel de Morillo in September 1480 were able to stop Mendoza and Talavera. The latter’s *Católica impugnación*—written around the same time as a reply to an anonymous *libellus* defending in the boldest terms the sort of hybrid Christian-Jewish

Inquisition in Fifteenth-Century Spain (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), 1149–54; Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, 57–64.

92 Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 76–77; *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, 97–108.

93 Most of these first polemical texts have recently been edited by Tomás González Rolán and Pilar Saquero Suárez-Somonte, *De la “Sentencia-Estatuto” de Pero Sarmiento a la “Instrucción” del Relator* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2012).

94 See Guillermo Verdín-Díaz, *Alonso de Cartagena y el Defensorium Unitatis Christianae* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1992); and Alonso de Oropesa, *Luz para conocimiento de los gentiles*, ed. Luis A. Díaz y Díaz (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1979). See also Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition*, 855–96; Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 70.

religiosity practiced by part of the Sevillian conversos—is an indication of Talavera's commitment to his defense of a Pauline spirituality where both Old Christians and sincere converts from Judaism could find their place as part of the mystic body of the Church.⁹⁵

In the vain hope of getting the royal edict annulled, leading figures of the converso community appealed to the pope, forcing Sixtus IV to reprimand the Catholic Monarchs for the way in which his bull had been applied. Other courtiers who were descendants of conversos, such as Juan de Lucena or Hernando del Pulgar, were not deterred from expressing their contrary views in public, either.⁹⁶ Unfortunately, these were only dilatory measures, powerless to thwart royal will and dismantle the nascent institution. But in the short period between 1478 and 1482 it was hard to imagine the future expansion of the Inquisition throughout Iberia and even less that the virulent anti-Semitic movement it would fuel was going to be irreversible. Seville being the epicenter of the conflict, and taking into account the close ties linking the Duke of Medina Sidonia to both archbishop Mendoza—his wife's uncle—and the Hieronymite Order, he could hardly have been unaware of the possible consequences of this religious, political, and economic crisis for his own interests, since most of his entrepreneurial projects depended on the management of the municipal finances by the converso elite.⁹⁷

It should be remembered that, in addition to his relationship by marriage with the Mendozas—the aristocratic family most committed to the cause of the converts and the new Pauline spirituality—Guzmán's own family, like most of the noble houses of Castile, had some kind of blood tie with prominent converso families, no matter how distant.⁹⁸ Without indulging in any genealogical determinism, I would only like to point out that this campaign against the New Christians must have been of concern to the Duke for more than one reason. Besides, since this was the socio-political context in which *E3* was presumably created, I feel it would be legitimate to push my argument a bit further. At a time when the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments was

95 The only extant copy of the *Católica Impugnación* was printed in 1487, but it would have been written ca. 1480–81. The edition of the work is preceded by a superb introduction by Francisco Márquez Villanueva. See also Giordano, *Apologetas de la fe*, 89–112.

96 Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 85–116; *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, 85–97.

97 Gil, *Los conversos*, 21–39; Antonio Cascales Ramos, *La Inquisición en Andalucía: Resistencia de los conversos a su implantación* (Seville: Editoriales Andaluzas Reunidas, 1986), 26–74.

98 Juan Alfonso de Guzmán, father of the 2nd Duke of Medina Sidonia, had been mentioned by the relator Fernando Díaz de Toledo in his defense of the conversos, as an example of the exalted position of the New Christians. González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, *De la “Sentencia-Estatuto,”* 115–16.

obsessively analyzed as part of the theological debate that was renegotiating the divide between “Jewish” and “(New) Christian” identities, we should consider whether it was possible to read—and illustrate—the Bible while leaving all this to the side. Inevitably, this thread of images woven around Scripture would have called to mind meanings other than those evoked by the Arragel and Ajuda Bibles, produced decades before.

Therefore, although the decision to focus on the literal reading of Scripture may have relegated doctrinal elements to a secondary place in the pictorial cycle devised for *E3*, it can equally be argued that the anachronistic depiction of Old Testament events not only would have brought the past closer to fifteenth-century Castilians but also would have implicitly endorsed the notion of continuity between the people of Israel and all the Christian faithful—regardless of their origin—in their common struggle against infidels (Figure 5.5).⁹⁹ This assimilation, of course, would not have increased the esteem for those Jews disinclined to acknowledge the coming of the Messiah or made their circumstances any better. The miniature that portrays the spies of Canaan (Figure 5.3), discussed above, makes this point clear, but the inclusion of some well-chosen motifs from the stock of anti-Jewish polemical writing did not necessarily mean that the audience’s negative attitudes were to be extended to the converso population. In fact, the strategy followed by Alfonso de Oropesa and Hernando de Talavera concerning the Jews was clear cut: the stancher the defense of the New Christian population, the harsher the condemnation of those who remained attached to the Mosaic Law.¹⁰⁰

As Felipe Pereda has argued, this distinction between “recalcitrant” Jews and those who had sincerely converted from Judaism turned out to be crucial for the supporters of the conversos also in the realm of image production.¹⁰¹ Images themselves were at the core of this controversy due to the reluctance of some New Christians to accept the cult of anthropomorphic representations of God, as well as images of Christ and the Virgin. That is why Talavera had tirelessly encouraged the cult of devotional domestic images among the laity

⁹⁹ This idea seems to be an echo of Lucena’s contention that all Christians together—regardless their Jewish or gentile origins—would be able to succeed in the Crusade against Granada. See Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 93.

¹⁰⁰ Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 74–83.

¹⁰¹ Felipe Pereda, “La Puerta de los Leones de la Catedral de Toledo. Una interpretación en clave litúrgica y funeraria,” in *Grabkunst und Sepulkralkultur in Spanien und Portugal/Arte funerario y cultura sepulcral en España y Portugal* (Frankfurt: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2006), 155–88, esp. 178–88.

during the evangelizing campaign of 1478.¹⁰² He also dedicated a substantial section of his *Católica impugnación* to the defense of cult images by means of a shrewd interpretation of some Old Testament passages.

It had been in the choir screen of Toledo's cathedral where episodes related to the orthodox cult of images had been accorded a prominent place. In Tom Nickson's words, "close examination of the screen reveals a subtle articulation of ideas concerning images and idolatry (...) belong[ing] to a supertextual discourse conducted through images themselves" that has its most explicit manifestation in the narrative of the six scenes devoted to the book of Exodus (32–40).¹⁰³ Most of these episodes were not included in *E3*, though, since the setting, audiences, and circumstances for the choir screen were completely different. Carved at the end of the fourteenth century during a period of widespread conversion, these reliefs related to episodes that seem to have been secondary at best in *E3*. The representation of the Crossing of the Red Sea (fol. 43r)—a metaphor for the promise of salvation offered to those who converted to Christianity through baptism—is the only illustration common to both cycles. Differences did not only result from the mainly apocryphal nature of the sources used by the Toledan artists but also from the specific emphasis laid on issues such as the division of peoples—Good and Bad Angels, Jacob and Esau, Israelites and Egyptians—that were absent from the Guzmán Bible.¹⁰⁴

On the contrary, it seems that it was not the division *of* peoples but the division *among* the Chosen People that most interested the mastermind behind the visual narrative of *E3*. That is my conclusion after examining the miniature showing the death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiron (Figure 5.4)—such an unusual iconographic option for the time that I cannot but consider it as a belated allusion to the converso controversy. The sole reference to this theme that I have been able to locate in contemporary Castile is found in a *Sermo in die beato Agustini*, written at the request of King John II in 1449 and attributed either to Juan de Torquemada or, more likely, to the Toledan canon Francisco de Toledo.¹⁰⁵ There, the *bachiller* Marcos García de Mora—Marquillos de Mazarambroz—and his supporters are labeled as "schismatics" by the anonymous author and likened to the three seditious Israelites who were swallowed up by the earth with their houses as punishment for having rebelled against Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:1–33) because of their "refusal to obey their leaders thus creating

¹⁰² Felipe Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia: Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del Cuatrocientos* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007), 27–144, esp. 29–73.

¹⁰³ Nickson, "Reframing the Bible," 78.

¹⁰⁴ Nickson, "Reframing the Bible," 75–76.

¹⁰⁵ González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, *De la "Sentencia-Estatuto,"* 33–77.

dissension and discord among the people of God.”¹⁰⁶ Even though this text had been written almost four decades before the creation of the Inquisition, some of its tropes reappeared in later works including that of Alfonso de Oropesa, so it can be assumed that it had already been incorporated to the “arsenal of ideas, images and biblical passages” forged by the pro-converso faction when *E3* was copied and illustrated.¹⁰⁷

Yet if there was a loaded motif in this debate, it was the victory of Queen Esther over the perfidious Haman, cited by the *relator* Fernando Díaz de Toledo and subsequently by Archbishop Lope de Barrientos. As is well known, the *Megillah Esther* was read for the feast of Purim even in the vernacular and was also hugely popular among Christians, who were well aware of the special significance this biblical book had for the Jewish population.¹⁰⁸ The *relator* began his *Instrucción* with a fierce accusation against the “second Haman”—no other than the *bachiller* Marquillos—who had incited revolt in some of Castile’s principal cities.¹⁰⁹ But the trope was amplified by Barrientos in his re-elaboration of the *relator’s* work, which bears the explicit title *Against Those Who Sow Discord toward Converts from Judaism*. In the most passionate terms, the archbishop honored the memory of “the great queen Esther,” heroine of the “Jewish nation, always subdued and enslaved,” while threatening Marquillos with the *exemplum* of Haman and his terrible fate.¹¹⁰

In the tragic context of the first Sevillian inquisitorial trials, the eloquent biblical episode would be reactivated again with the detailed sequence of

¹⁰⁶ “Utinam saperent et intellegerent et nouissima prouideret, et memores essent sibi finium schismaticorum illorum, uidelicet, Core, Dathan et Abiron, de quibus, que quia oboedientiam duci suo substraxerunt et schisma uel scisuram in populo Dei introduxerunt, nouam rem fecit Dominus quod aperiens terra os suum deglutiuit eos et omnia quae ad eos pertinebant, descenderuntque in infernum uiuentes operti suos ignis descendentes de caelo uorax flamma consupsit.” González Rolan and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, *De la “Sentencia-Estatuto,”* 52.

¹⁰⁷ Alonso de Oropesa, *Luz*, 636–37.

¹⁰⁸ See Gutwirth, “Religión,” 120–22. See also Carlos Sáinz de la Maza et al., “Una versión judeo-española del Libro de Esther,” *Ilu: Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones* 4 (1999): 225–56, here at 229.

¹⁰⁹ González Rolan and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, *De la “Sentencia-Estatuto,”* 93–120, here at 96. I am indebted to Yanai Israeli for first pointing out this remarkable coincidence to me.

¹¹⁰ “Mas por ser revolerdor y escandalizador de judíos y provocador de la cruel espada y muerte d’ellos mostró Dios sus maravillas contra él (...) Mas este malo Amán por pasar aquestos términos, suciamente fue abilitado, y injuriosamente fue sentenciado de quien primero lo amaba, caído de su alteça, y en una muy alta forca enforcado donde para siempre.” González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, *De la “Sentencia-Estatuto,”* 121–41, esp. 122–23.

images devoted to the story of Esther in *E3* (Figures 5.6–5.7). This short visual narrative is highly exceptional in this manuscript, since no other book of the Bible has as much illustration in proportion to its length. In the first miniature, Queen Esther humiliates herself before her husband, Ahasuerus (fol. 464v), who later commands Haman to parade the Jew Mordecai in royal garments as a reward for his services to the crown (fol. 465v). After this manifestation of the king's favor, Haman instigates a plot to kill all Jews of Persia and even attempts to convince Ahasuerus to send Mordecai to the gallows. However, once the evil vizier's treason and his conspiracy against the Jewish people is exposed by Esther, he is hanged at the scaffold he had built for Mordecai (fol. 466r), only to be followed afterwards by his ten sons (fol. 467r).

In strictly iconographic terms, these miniatures are hardly remarkable, inasmuch as they comply with long-established *formulae* that go back to illustrious precedents such as the murals in the synagogue of Dura Europos (ca. 240) or the lavish Bible from Ripoll (Vatican, BAV, MS 5729, fol. 319r; ca. 1025–50). Similar cycles could also be found in the windows of the Sainte-Chapelle and the Arsenal Bible (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5211, 261r), or in the already mentioned Utrecht *Bible historiale* (The Hague, MS 78 D 38 II, 13r, 14v, 15r [2] and 15v).¹¹¹ Even in Castile it is possible to discover a contemporary representation of some of these episodes in the *Suma de virtuoso deseo* (Madrid, BNE, MS 1518, fol. 68v), copied close to the time of the Guzmán Bible.¹¹² We do not need, then, to postulate the existence of illustrated Esther rolls as in the case of the Arragel Bible, where some striking legendary elements from the *T.B. Megillah* and the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* were included in the two miniatures devoted to the story of the Queen of Persia.¹¹³ What makes the Esther cycle in *E3* so extraordinary is rather its cumulative dramatic effect that makes it the most powerful illustrated sequence in the whole manuscript (Figure 5.7).

Many layers of meanings overlap in these images. Certainly, the book of Esther had a venerable meaning for the Jewish people as an expression of the conviction of the final triumph of Judaism over its enemies. However, Christian writers such as Isidore of Seville had already appropriated the figure of the

¹¹¹ For a panoramic survey of the iconography of Esther in Christian art, see I. Weber, "Esther," in *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1976–83), 2:684–87.

¹¹² See Rafael Beltrán, "Dibujos didácticos y memoria de la antigüedad romana: Las glosas de los *Proverbios del Marqués de Santillana* ilustradas en la *Suma de virtuoso deseo*," *Troianalexandrina* 14 (2014): 91–142, esp. 114–5.

¹¹³ Nordström, *The Duke of Alba's*, 196–202.

Jewish queen, regarding both her and Judith as *typi Ecclesiae*.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the former was soon identified with the Virgin, understood as a *figura* of the humble Bride of Christ who prays for sinners. On the other side, Esther's story also had deep resonances for the conversos, both those who lived as Christians but hid their identity as Esther had done at the court of Ahasuerus and those who endured humiliation with the expectation of being avenged like Mordecai and the whole of the Jewish people.¹¹⁵ It is not surprising to find that the legendary accounts of one of the first victims of the Inquisition, Diego de Susán, include the words with which he supposedly cursed his enemies and asked for the assistance of Queen Esther.¹¹⁶

The emergence and spread of Messianic movements at the end of the fifteenth century—not only among cornered Jews and harassed conversos but among Christians who were assured of the conquest of Granada as well—would have contributed to making this atmosphere even denser with dark premonitions.¹¹⁷ At a time, masterfully described by Stefania Pastore, when the Inquisition was a matter of theological dispute and there were many who complained about the inhumanity of its punishments, the manifest injustice done to innocent families, the pervasive climate of suspicion that it created, and the economic loss caused by the massacre or flight of the conversos, the biblical past might have been turned into a mirror for contemporary tragedy. It does not seem unlikely that many New Christians and their advocates would have elevated their imploring gaze to Queen Isabel—formerly allied to the converso elite—as to a new Esther.¹¹⁸ However, their pleas went unanswered.

¹¹⁴ “Judith et Esther typum Ecclessiae gestant, hostes fidei puniunt ac populum Dei ab interitu eruunt.” Isidore, *Allegoriae quaedam sacrae scripturae* (PL 83,116).

¹¹⁵ See Barry Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb: Jewish Interpretation of the Book of Esther in the Middle Ages* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 183–200.

¹¹⁶ According to Sebastián Pinelo, the mob tried to kill Susán on his way to the auto da fé, “porque dezían que entrava en la iglesia de Santa María soterraña en esta cibdat en Sant Niculás, y hazía una oración que decía: ‘Aquí me veo entre estos mis enemigos: ¡quemados los vea, los muertos y los vivos! Esta oración ofrezco a la reina Hester para que la ofrezca al Santo Abrahán.’” Gil, *Los conversos*, 67. See also, José Antonio Ollero Pina, “Una familia de conversos sevillanos en los orígenes de la Inquisición: Los Benadeva,” *Hispania Sacra* 40 (1988): 45–105.

¹¹⁷ Pastore, *Una herejía española*, 117–63. See also Carlos Carrete Parrondo, “Mesianismo/sionismo entre los conversos castellanos,” in Doron, ed., *Encuentros and Desencuentros*, 481–90.

¹¹⁸ Esther was the ideal model for all female rulers throughout the Middle Ages. See Lois L. Huneycutt, “Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos,” in *Power of*

This reading between the lines of the Esther miniatures in *E3* thus sheds some light on the attitude of the Duke of Medina Sidonia towards the conversos and corroborates the views expressed by Juan Gil, who called attention to the role played by Enrique de Guzmán in the promotion of many New Christians from his entourage and to the occasional protection granted to them even after the inquisitional court was established in the city.¹¹⁹ This tacit—and sometimes ambiguous—alliance had been forged in the 1460s when the Duke was struggling with the Marquis of Arcos for control over Andalusia's principal cities. Guzmán's progressive retreat from public life and even his reluctance to endorse the military offensive against Granada may have even been a consequence of the sudden removal of the conversos and their supporters.

Whatever its political intent, the ultimate aim of this appropriation of the story of Esther by a member of the pro-converso faction remained confined to the private sphere, like most of the duke's maneuvers. Nevertheless, as a poignant critique disguised under religious cover—rather than as an example of religious polemic, tout court—these images witnessed to a way of reading the Bible that was deeply rooted in the tradition of “picture Bibles”: that of making the past a mode of experiencing the reality of political life, in the eloquent definition coined by Gabrielle M. Spiegel.¹²⁰

the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 147–77.

119 Gil, *Los conversos*, 65–67. The conversos were described as “muy aficionados a la Casa de Niebla” among the supporters of the Marquis of Cádiz. See Rica Amrán, “La imagen de judíos y conversos en los Hechos de Rodrigo Ponce de León, primer Marqués de Cádiz,” *e-Humanista* 20 (2012): 17–36, here at 31.

120 Spiegel, “Political Utility,” 316.

CHAPTER 6

From Christian Polemic to a Jewish-Converso Dialogue

Jewish Skepticism and Rabbinic-Christian Traditions in the Scrutinium Scripturarum

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Abstract

This article presents a new reading of the polemical strategies and arguments embodied in the “anti-Jewish” tractate by the converted bishop of Burgos, Pablo de Santa María (c.1352–1435), the *Scrutinium scripturarum* (c.1432). It suggests the *Scrutinium* reflected a unique polemical dynamic that emerged between converts and Jews following the mass conversions of 1391 and the early fifteenth century, regarding the spiritual assimilation of converts to their new faith. Grappling with the new challenges faced by converts, the *Scrutinium* articulated a Christian approach toward rabbinic traditions and Jewish skepticism that differed dramatically from the scholastic–polemical traditions that were employed at the disputation of Tortosa. Its introduction of rabbinic esoterism provided its Latin-reading audience new historical and theological grounds for the integration of rabbinic authority within Christian scholarship and history. In doing so, it embodied what could be considered a distinct “converso voice,” which challenged the customary religious boundaries between Judaism and Christianity.

Keywords

Pablo De Santa María – Gerónimo de Santa Fe – *Scrutinium Scripturarum* – religious polemics – The Tortosa Disputation – Christian Hebraism – conversion – conversos – Christian mission – esoterism – philosophy – Maimonides – Maimonidean controversy – Christian Kabbalah

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In recent years, efforts to identify a unique converso voice in Christian-Iberian literature have become more cautious, as historians have shifted their attention from the genealogical classification of certain works or writers as “converso” to a subtle analysis of the social and intellectual dynamics imposed by the dramatic events of the mass conversions. It has been suggested that this historical scene did not simply prescribe the transmission of fixed “Jewish” qualities into Christian culture through the works of conversos, but rather facilitated the emergence of new religious ideas and conceptual categories through an enduring dialogical process both within and between all three religious groups (i.e., Jews, New-Christians and Old Christians).¹ One such attempt to address the cultural and intellectual impact of the converso crisis was made recently by Ryan Szpiech, who examined the historiographical poem *La siete edades del mundo*, written by the preeminent scholar among the first generation of conversos, the bishop of Burgos, Pablo de Santa María (c.1352–1435).² According to Szpiech, several key aspects of the text that were thought to be uniquely converso, could be read as a “response to concrete issues arising from the debate between converted Jews and their former co-religionists,” which he traced back to Pablo’s famous polemical dialogue, the *Scrutinium scripturarum*. In other words, some of the distinctive historiographical motifs in the work of Pablo de Santa María were nourished on the inner logic of the burgeoning religious rivalry between Jews and converts.

This article aims to broaden the scope of the argument, claiming that the dynamics between Jews, conversos and Old Christians that were reflected in the writings of Pablo de Santa María produced much more than new poetical or historiographical traits: They changed the polemical discourse itself, introducing (at least to the Latin reader) fresh forms of religious argumentation that challenged the customary divide between Judaism and Christianity.

The remarkable transformation of the celebrated rabbi of Burgos, Solomon ha-Levi, into an esteemed Christian clergyman and a high-ranking royal administrator in the Crown of Castile, marked, already in the eyes of his contemporaries, the prospects of the Jewish mass-conversions that swept the Iberian Peninsula following the riots of 1391.³ Yet, it was only in the early 1430s,

¹ See the studies of David Nirenberg, now collected in the volume, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), chaps. 1–8.

² Ryan Szpiech, “Scrutinizing History: Polemic and Exegesis in Pablo de Santa María’s *Siete edades del mundo*,” *Medieval Encounters* 16.1 (2010): 96–142.

³ Solomon Ha-Levi was nearly forty when he was baptized in 1390 or 1391 at the Cathedral of Burgos. By 1394, he was already serving at the court of Avignon as advisor to and personal

at the tail end of his meteoric career as the bishop of Burgos and more than forty years after his own conversion, that he set about to write a theological tractate that would chart the path from Judaism to Christianity. This was just a few years after his “Additions to the biblical commentaries of Nicholas de Lyra” (*Additiones ad Postillam Nicolai de Lyra*), with its staggering critique of Christian biblical scholarship, began circulating.⁴ The *Additiones* sparked a furious response from followers of Lyra, and Pablo’s new work was surely intended (among other things) both to answer his critics and prove his piety. The

delegate of Pope Benedict XIII, and in 1402 he won his first bishopric seat at Cartagena. Simultaneously, he acquired positions at the royal court of Castile and by 1407 he served as the tutor of the infant King John II (1405–54), the *Canciller mayor*, and as a member of the royal council. In 1414, Pablo was appointed (together with three other loyalists) to act in the name of Ferdinand de Antequera as a regent of Castile. In 1416, he gave up the bulk of his administrative obligations at court and assumed the prestigious bishopric seat in his home town of Burgos, where he would spend most of his time until his death in 1435. For biographical details, see Luciano Serrano, *Los conversos D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena. Obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores* (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Arias Montano, 1942); Isaac Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols., trans. Louis Schoffman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992), 2:139ff; Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos. Historia de la judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios* (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Arias Montano, 1952); Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 2001), 168–206; and see more details and a bibliography in Yosi Yisraeli, “Constructing and Undermining Converso Jewishness: Profiat Duran and Pablo de Santa María,” in *Religious Conversion: Historical Experiences and Meanings*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Miri Rubin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 198–200. For a textual analysis of Pablo’s short autobiographic account of his own conversion, see Ryan Szpiech, “A Father’s Bequest: Augustinian Typology and Personal Testimony in the Conversion Narrative of Solomon Halevi/Pablo de Santa María,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Jonathan Deeter and Arturo Prats (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 177–98; Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 41–51. On Pablo’s position as rabbi prior to his conversion and his ongoing ties with his Jewish colleagues, see below at note 58.

⁴ In 1429, the *Additiones* were compiled and edited as a single work from different commentaries that Pablo wrote throughout his career. As we learn from the prologue he composed on that occasion, Pablo planned to continue the work until it covered the entire Bible. In 1431 he wrote the last *additio* to the book of Revelation, and then turned to the new project of the *Scrutinium*, which he completed, according to some manuscripts, in 1432. For further details and a bibliography, see Yosi Yisraeli, “Christianized Sephardic Critique on Rashi’s *Peshat* in Pablo de Santa María’s *Additiones ad Postillam Nicolai de Lyra*,” in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (New York: Fordham, 2015), 128–41.

result was the massive polemical dialogue known as the *Scrutinum scripturarum* (*The Scrutiny of the Scriptures*), which runs almost 500 pages in the early modern editions. The treatise won tremendous popularity among the following generations of Christian readers, and modern scholars often listed it with the works of Raymond Martini, Nicholas de Lyra, and Gerónimo de Santa Fe, as one of the capstones of the *adversus iudeeos* genre in the high Middle Ages.⁵ However, as in his biblical commentaries, Pablo's polemical work did not always fall in line with past Christian traditions.⁶ While it of course gloried in the triumph of Christian dogmas over Jewish perfidy, it did so from the singular perspective of a scholar who had mastered both rabbinic and Christian disciplines, and who was acutely aware of the challenges awaiting the new population of converts. Thus, although written in Latin for an audience of Christian theologians, the *Scrutinum scripturarum* nevertheless preserved traces of an inner Jewish-converso dialogue that differed, in many respects, from the common forms of Christian anti-Jewish apologetics. It put forward bold ideas on biblical hermeneutics, the Jewish-rabbinic origins of the Church, the value of

5 See a list of editions and manuscripts of the *Scrutinum* in Klaus Reinhardt and Horacio Santiago-Otero, *Biblioteca Bíblica Ibérica Medieval* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, CSIC, 1986), 245–47. They count about sixty manuscripts and five printed editions in the fifteenth century. To those we can add several dozen more manuscripts listed in other catalogues, which would bring the total number to more than a hundred. Thus, if we compare it to works of similar scope, it would seem that by the end of fifteenth century the *Scrutinum scripturarum* had become one of the most popular in its genre. Compare to, Ora Limor, “The Epistle of Rabbi Samuel of Morocco: A Best-Seller in the World of Polemics,” in *Contra Iudeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 177–93, here at 178. I will refer here to the 1591 Burgos edition of the *Scrutinum*, edited by Cristóbal Sanctotis, which is in most common use. All quotations have been compared to MS UB Basel B1 17, (dated to 1436) and unless otherwise noted, the two texts do not diverge.

6 The *Scrutinum* has not been accorded a great deal of academic attention. Thus, it has been depicted in general historiography, on the basis of traditions going back to the sixteenth century, as an extreme and violent expression of converso anti-Jewish sentiment (with the important exception of Francisco Cantera Burgos). The examples are abundant, but it will suffice to point to the rare agreement between Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, both of whom depicted the *Scrutinum* as a theological formulation of the “purest villainy” by converts toward their own people. Américo Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History*, trans. Edmund L. King (Princeton: University Press, 1954), 538–39; Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *Spain, a Historical Enigma*, trans. Colette Joly Dees and David Sven Reher (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1975), 836. Notably, the views in Jewish historiography were no different. For studies addressing the *Scrutinum*, see Yisraeli, “Constructing and Undermining,” 200 n. 37, and in the following notes below.

Hebraic scholarship and even the role of Jewish converts in the history of salvation. Some of these notions will resonate loudly in the following decades in the Iberian Peninsula and beyond, preparing the ground for new forms of Christian Hebraism. In the limited scope of this study, however, our attention will be given, first of all, to the origins of these ideas in the polemical realities between Jews, converts and Old Christians at a time when the religious boundaries between them were still open to negotiation. I will argue that the *Scrutinium* proposed themes and views that were hardly familiar in Christian scholastic literature and that, moreover, often subverted the aggressive polemical language of the Christian mission.

To illustrate this shift in the *Scrutinium*, we shall draw a parallel to the famous Disputation of Tortosa (1413–14), in which the Christian missionary-polemical ideals of the late Middle Ages were fully materialized. Pablo de Santa María was well aware of the disputation and its outcomes, and I will argue that in the *Scrutinium*, he engaged critically with these events. In this context, special heed will be paid to the *Scrutinium's* unique approach to rabbinic traditions and its representation of the Jewish perfidy as essentially philosophical—the foremost issues for Christian polemics and its theological reflection on Judaism since the thirteenth century. As we shall see, through its keenly polemical readings of Jewish ideas and inner tensions, the *Scrutinium* portrayed a Judaism that was essentially foreign to Christian readers, and articulated novel ways to integrate rabbinic traditions into Christian history and scholarship. The ambition and capacity to do so, I believe, were idiosyncratic to the evolving converso crisis.

From a Jewish-Christian to a Christian-Converso Dialogue

The distinct polemical approach of the *Scrutinium scripturarum* is manifest already in its basic literary structure as a two-fold dialogue. From the thirteenth century on, the literary form of a Jewish-Christian dialogue had been progressively replaced by other types of *Contra iudeos* literature such as collections of rabbinic testimonies, anti-Talmudic defamations and scholastic *quaestiones*. Hence, the decision to write in the early fifteenth century a comprehensive treatise in the form of a dialogue was not trivial. However, even more extraordinarily, the second part of the *Scrutinium* was not a “Jewish-Christian” dialogue, but rather a converso-Christian dialogue.⁷

⁷ Gilbert Dahan, *The Christian Polemic against the Jews in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jody Gladding (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 60, 63. See also his discussion of

The first book of the *Scrutinium* opens as a conversation in which Paul the Christian tries to convince his Jewish counterpart, Saul, that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the messiah for which the Jews hope and pray.⁸ It is comprised of ten sections that deal with different articles of the Christian faith, starting from the universal meanings of the scriptural promises to Israel, the “calling to the nations” and the spiritual salvation through the suffering of Christ and up to the abrogation of the Old Law, the Trinity and the Incarnation.⁹ By the close of the tenth section, Saul is convinced of these truths, and converts to Christianity. Yet Saul’s faith was fragile and required fortification. Accordingly, the two continue their interchange in a second book, but now as an educational colloquy (*dediscola*) between a teacher, and his “recently converted disciple” who presents a series of “admirations” and difficulties regarding certain Christian dogmas.¹⁰

polemical literary genres in *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 405–23. On the literary genre of dialogue in the middle ages see, Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), and specifically on the Jewish-Christian polemic in chap. 6. See also Ryan Szpeiech’s remarks on the post-medieval construction of “polemics” as a genre, in his introduction to *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference*, 8–9.

- 8 As Pablo states in the prologue, the names Saul and Paul were picked in allusion to Paul the Apostle and his former Jewish self, Saul of Tarsus (*Scrutinium*, 104). The image of Paul played an important role throughout Pablo’s theological works as a model for a pious Jewish convert.
- 9 The first book includes the following ten sections: (1) Who is to be saved and redeemed by the messiah, 3 chaps.; (2) What the Calling for the Nations means for the dignity of Israel, 4 chaps.; (3) Whether the time for the coming of Christ had already passed, 4 chaps.; (4) What the promised gathering of Israel by the messiah means, 4 chaps.; (5) How Israel is to be redeemed through the messiah, 11 chaps.; (6) Whether the redemption through the messiah would also extend to the biblical fathers and to other believers who had preceded him, 6 chaps.; (7) Whether the Kingdom of Christ is the fourth kingdom described by Daniel, 13 chaps.; (8) What the reinstitution of divine laws at the time of the messiah means, 16 chaps.; (9) The mystery of the Holy Trinity, 17 chaps.; and (10) The mystery of the messiah’s divinity, 9 chaps.
- 10 The second book contains the following six sections: (1) The mystery of the incarnation, 6 chaps.; (2) The virtues of the glorious Virgin Mary, 12 chaps.; (3) The sacred Sacrament of the Altar and the religious devotion that it stirs, 16 chaps.; (4) The differences between the ancient fathers of the Old Testament and the saints that lived after the advent of Christ, 9 chaps.; (5) The opinions of Job and his friends, and their erroneous interpretation by the Jews, 13 chaps.; and (6) The Jewish perfidy after the death of Christ, and other related matters, 14 chaps.

The transformation of the *Scrutinium* from a strictly Jewish-Christian dialogue to a converso-Christian colloquy attests to a recognition that conversion of Jews did not end at the baptismal font. Rather, it was a lengthy process that required further catechesis and pastoral care. Pablo finds affirmation of the gradual nature of this spiritual transformation in the words of the Apostles, who described the new believers as “newborn infants, longing for pure, spiritual milk through which they may grow into salvation.”¹¹ Moreover, the *Scrutinium* highlights the unique situation of Jewish converts, in a reality where they often continued to reside among the Jews, maintaining close familial, economic and social ties. These complications become apparent as many of the convert’s concerns are not just the “normal” perplexities of a neophyte, but the result of continuing Jewish influence. As the disciple explains in the opening section of the second book, he hears the infidels “that were once his friends,”¹² murmur every day against the Christian faith. The first three sections of the second book has the disciple asking the teacher to help him answer his Jewish neighbors, who mock the belief in the Incarnation, the cult of Virgin Mary and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. At times, expressing a deep personal distress:¹³

I want to ask you about that which I often hear—both from the infidels and the heretics who speak and mock our true faith while they dwell in their own calamity. For every day, as they scold me, they say: “tell us, where is your God?” ... And even though, God be blessed, my faith is not affected by such and similar arguments, which I often hear from the infidels and the heretics, my bones are broken as I recall how in face of this reproach,¹⁴ I made myself deaf, became a man that hears not and that has

¹¹ The teacher quotes 1 Pet. 2:2, and then also 1 Cor. 3:2 and Heb. 5:13 which apply the same metaphor to describe the new followers of Jesus. *Scrutinium*, 2.1.2, 361; and see further below, note 79.

¹² “I wish to learn about that which amazes me, and on which I have heard the infidels that were once my friends murmur, and who even up to this day still murmur ...” (*Vellem informari de quodam quod est mihi mirabile, et de quo infidels olim socios meos audivi murmurare, qui etiam hodie de hoc murmurant [...]*); *Scrutinium*, 2.1.1, 359.

¹³ “Hec et similia sepe ab infidelibus et hereticis audiveram. Ex quibus licet fides mea non patiatur ex suis dictis determinentum, benedictus deus, confringuntur tamen ossa mea predicta obprobria quae alias audivi reminiscens et factus sum sicut surdus non audiens et non habens in ore suo redargutiones, quapropter valde desiderio ut me circa hec sic divina gratia cooperante illumines ut respondere possim exprobrantibus [B. 1591: mihi] verbum.” *Scrutinium*, 2.3.5, 410.

¹⁴ Ps. 41:11.

no reproofs in his mouth.¹⁵ That is why I strongly wish that with the help of the divine grace you shall educate me, so that I am able to respond to these words of reproof.

Initially, the teacher reminds the disciple that new converts are prohibited from conversing on such matters with their Jewish acquaintances—a warning in line with the repeated prohibitions that Christian authorities issued against laymen and even untrained clergymen engaging in disputes with Jews over religion.¹⁶ Yet under the new circumstances of intense Jewish-converso interaction, these Church regulations fell to the wayside: the teacher could not be indifferent to the pleas of his disciple. Jewish doubts and “murmurs” were a part of everyday life for converts like Saul even after they proclaimed their Christian faith, and thus the teacher agreed to address them.

Importantly, this was not the only inter-religious tension expressed in the *Scrutinium*. The last three sections of the second book imply that alongside the Jewish offensive, converts faced another challenge that threatened to undermine their new sense of belonging to the mystical body of Christ: an over-zealous repudiation of anything related to Judaism. In these sections, the dialogue treats issues that were not common to the genre, emphasizing the spiritual, exegetical and covenantal continuity between Judaism and Christianity over competing Christian ideas of “supersessionism.” In section four, the teacher stresses that Christians must admire the Jewish fathers of the Old Testament as historical figures, since all the spiritual and devotional customs that were introduced in the Gospels are founded on the deeds of the ancient Israelites. Section five provides an extraordinary comparison between the commentaries of Thomas Aquinas and Maimonides on the book of Job, underscoring that the Christian ideal of spiritual punishment and reward (*praemium et poenam*) was given already to the Jews in the Old Testament.¹⁷ And in section six, which discusses the mystery of Israel’s fall from greatness and its eventual salvation, the teacher refutes the accusations of Old Christians who claim that the spiritual purity of Jewish converts is somehow marred by

¹⁵ Ps. 37:15.

¹⁶ Ram Ben-Shalom, “Between Official and Private Dispute: The Case of Christian Spain and Provence in the Late Middle Ages,” *AJS Review* 27 (2003): 23–72, here at 42–43; Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 191–92.

¹⁷ It seems that Pablo’s use of this unusual Latin expression, serves as a translation of the Hebrew *sachar va-’onesh*. As to the pivotal role that Maimonides plays in the *Scrutinium* see below, at note 88.

the sins of their Jewish fathers.¹⁸ On this account alone, the *Scrutinium* should be considered as the first theological tractate in defense of conversos, written fifteen years before the public controversy over the anti-converso laws of the Toledo rebellion broke out.¹⁹ However, as we shall see, thanks to its particular polemical logic, the *Scrutinium* nearly in its entirety could have functioned simultaneously for the defense of conversos from both their Jewish and Old Christian adversaries.

The literary setting of the *Scrutinium* brings to the fore of the theological discussion the rising tensions between Jews, converts and Old Christians that were spurred over the spiritual assimilation of those already baptized. In some crucial ways, it was a very different polemical scenario than those typically written by Christian polemicists. The stark differences, as well as their more subtle meanings, emerge as we compare the *Scrutinium* to another momentous polemic, which Pablo closely witnessed—the so-called “Tortosa disputation.”²⁰

A Polemical “Tour de Force” at Tortosa

Throughout the first two decades of the fifteenth century, Christians showed increasing concern about the harmful effects on Christian society of close interactions between Jews and “New Christians.” The solutions at this stage were mostly directed at the Jewish population. Christian authorities in both Castile (where Pablo already held high positions at court) and Aragon passed severe segregation laws (1405, 1408, 1412, 1415) that prohibited Jews (and Muslims) from various interactions with Christians. At the same time, they also enhanced their missionary efforts to complete the conversion of the remaining Jews.²¹

¹⁸ See a more detailed discussion of these sections that includes also Pablo's account of the 1391 riots and mass conversions, in Yisraeli, “Constructing and Undermining,” 201–13.

¹⁹ Claude B. Stuczynski rightly has included the *Scrutinium* in his valuable discussion of “pro-converso” treatises. Stuczynski, “Pro-Converso Apologetics and Biblical Exegesis,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Jonathan Decter and Arturo Prats (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 155–71; and see also Bruce Rosenstock, *New Men: Conversos, Christian Theology and Society in Fifteenth-Century Castile* (London: Quen Mary and Westfield College, 2002), 14–15, 35–37.

²⁰ On Pablo's possible role in the disputation, see below at note 46.

²¹ For an overview of this legislation, see Netanyahu, *The Origins*, 177–96; and see Nirenberg's description of the dynamics leading to these solutions in his “Conversion, Sex, and Segregation,” and “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities,” in *Neighboring Faiths*, chaps. 5, 7.

One of the measures, taken under the patronage and in the presence of Pope Benedict XIII, forced the leading rabbis of Aragon to engage in a public disputation with the Jewish convert Gerónimo de Santa Fe in the papal court at Tortosa.²² This elaborate, almost two-year event (1413–14) held before a large crowd of theologians and noblemen, represented the most ambitious attempt of the Middle Ages to execute the Christian polemical tactics on the region's most distinguished Jewish opponents. These polemical strategies were developed along scholastic ideals of Christian knowledge, and often for internally apologetic or educational purposes.²³ Yet, as the disputation at Tortosa shows, this does not mean that they were not expected to meet missionary goals when faced with a real Jewish audience.

As Gerónimo stated several times, since the sole purpose of the public encounter at Tortosa was to save the souls of the Jews by instructing them in the Christian truth, it was not to be conducted as a wrangle between equal opponents who struggle like sophists to disprove each other's claim with various reasoning.²⁴ Instead, the dispute would follow his pre-planned program

²² On the organization and the course of the disputation, see Baer, *A History*, 2:170–232; Antonio Pacios López, *La disputa de Tortosa: Estudio histórico, crítico, doctrinal*, 2 vols. (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Arias Montano, 1957); Ángel Alcalá Galve, “La disputa de Tortosa entre dos alcañizanos: presupuestos, importancia histórica y proyección actual,” *Boletín del Centro de Estudios Bajoaragoneses* 7 (1995): 9–40; Alcalá Galve, “Cristianos y judíos en Aragón: la disputa de Tortosa,” in *Inquisición y sociedad*, ed. Angel de Prado Moura (Valladolid: Universidad, 1999), 27–63; Carlos del Valle Rodríguez, *Obras completas de Jerónimo de Santa Fe*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Aben Ezra, 2006), 1:29–52, 2:xl–lxvi. And on other aspects of the disputation, see further below.

²³ As discussed further below.

²⁴ Gerónimo set forth the norms, guidelines and implications of the debate through a homily on Isa. 1:18–19: “Come now, let us argue, says the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.” As he explains, there are different ways to “argue” (*arguere*). One, is in sophist manner, like Datan and Aviram did when they challenged Moses and Aaron: *modo pro contradicere seu impugnare, ut tam veris quam falsis rationibus, vere vel sophistice, quomodo victor impugnans iudicetur*. Another way to argue, however, is: *ad extripanda dubia, ut veritas clarius elucescat, quomodo discipuli arguunt contra magistros, seu magistri suis in lectionibus, actibusque generalibus, ad invicem altercantes*. This, according to Gerónimo, was the proper method for the occasion: *Hunc enim arguendi non ad iuste vel iniuste impugnandum, non ad sophistice nec fallaciōe disputandum; sed ad veritatem elucidandum et vere Messiam venisse demonstrandūm hec fuit disputatio ordinata [...]*; Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:1.24–26. And see for example how Gerónimo states in the eighth session, that he is not obliged to address the Jewish arguments since the purpose of the encounter is not to dispute but to teach the Jews:

(written up and sent in advance to the Jewish communities), just as pupils are obliged to follow their master in a *lectio*.²⁵ The Jews could express their reservations if they failed to understand the Christian instruction, but they were not permitted to change the course of the discussion by introducing new questions or sources that were not included in the original plan, or that Gerónimo saw as irrelevant.²⁶ Evidently, the process was inspired by and meant to resemble the scholastic disputations that evolved in the medieval universities, with the Jews assigned the intellectually impotent position of “bachelor.”²⁷ Yet as the constant quarrels regarding the precise rules of engagement and the

ex mandato sue Sanctitatis preterita recitans, ait: intencionem domini nostri principaliter, non ad disputandum, sed ad dictos iudeos in fide Catholica convertendum, informandum et ad quecumque dubia inde eis orta satisfaciendum; non autem ad quorumcumque singularia dicta et oppiniones perfide substinentum [...]; Pachios, Tortosa, 2:8.53. See also in the following note.

- 25 On the two treatises of Gerónimo that outlined the program (*Ad convincendum perfidiam Judaeorum; De iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut*), which appeared at that time in Latin, Hebrew and Spanish versions, see Del Valle, *Obras*, 1:65–77. The Latin version was published in *Maxima Bibliotheca veterum patrum et antiquorum scriptorum ecclesiasticorum*, 27 vols. (Lyon: Anisson, 1677), 26:528–54.
- 26 See for example session twelve, in which the Jews argue that even according to the hierarchical guidelines that Gerónimo set, him being the “informer” and they the “informed,” they are allowed to introduce their own material, so that he would “inform” them better (Pachios, *Tortosa*, 2:12.75). Gerónimo responded later that day that as the informer, he was in complete control of the course and subject matter of the discussion, as a teacher sets the curriculum for his disciples, and not the other way around: *Informator, enim in gradu preeminent magistrali, informandus vero in gradu est disciplinali; magister namque, nedum intellectu rei illius inqua debet discipulum informare, verum eciam in faciendo debitum ordinem reuem in quibus est eum informaturus, videlicet, a qua illarum debet incipere, est preferendum [...].* He then compares the Jews to a pupil who requests that a teacher instruct him on astronomy. The pupil wants to start from the Almagest, whereas the teacher knows he should begin learning basic arithmetic and the geometric principles of Euclid (Pachios, *Tortosa*, 2:12.79). He concludes his rejection of the Jewish arguments by rearticulating that the proceedings are predicated on the aim of saving the souls of the Jews by informing them that the messiah had already come, thus rendering any other question irrelevant: *Ita, in propositione, sanctissimus dominus noster Papa a Deo in salute animarum ad informandum vos missus, informans ac vobis notificans Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Messiam esse verissimum, vidensque in presenti quendam erroneam vos tenere oppinionem atque servare, Messiam, scilicet nondum venisse, [...] vos ante omnia ab illa erronea oppinione atque falsa revocare, Messiam iam diu est venisse probaturus.*
- 27 Del Valle, *Obras*, 1:35–36. And see also Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 138–41. Novikoff has made this argument with regard to the disputation of Barcelona. See 199–211.

terminological inconsistencies that accompanied them show, the exact format of the disputation was not self-evident to the participants.²⁸

Under these strictures, the encounter at Tortosa became a tour de force of Christian polemics, crystalizing the three key elements that dominated it in the Late Middle Ages. The first was an infatuation with the question of the messiah's advent. Since the thirteenth century, Christian polemicists had become increasingly convinced that the best way to undermine Judaism was to use scriptural and rabbinic authority to prove that the time for the messiah's advent had already passed. A voluminous polemical literature thus made painstaking inquiry into a handful of prophecies that could support this claim.²⁹ This notion was distilled at Tortosa, where the entire framework of the disputation was based upon the syllogistic conclusion that all disagreements between Jews and Christian were reducible to a single question: *utrum Messias venerit an non*, i.e., Has the messiah already come?³⁰ Accordingly, a large majority of the discussions at Tortosa—about seventy percent—were dedicated to this question.³¹ The second element was the intensive use of Talmudic legends (*aggadot*) as Christological proof-texts. This strategy (which Amos Funkenstein defined as the “fourth type” of Christian polemic), was introduced

²⁸ Gerónimo's homily on Isa. 1:18–19 (note 25 above), from which he draws the rules of the encounter, was surely not needed in any formal academic disputation in which, indeed, neither Gerónimo, nor his Jewish opponents had any training. Moreover, it seems that the Jews, who were coerced into participating in the disputation as “students,” did not face another “bachelor,” but rather a “master” who formulated the propositions and questions for discussion. See note 26 above, where Gerónimo and the Jews are described as master and disciples and not as two equals.

²⁹ Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens*, 494–500. The most important of these prophecies were Jacob's promise in Gn 49:10 that “the scepter shall not depart from Judah [...]”; Daniel's vision of 70 weeks (chapter 9); and Isaiah's prediction that “a child will be born for us [...]” (9:6). For example, the *Capistrum Iudeorum* by Raymond Martini deals primarily with this issue, (ed. and trans. Adolfo Robles Sierra, 2 vols., Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1990); and see also his lengthy discussions in, *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos*, ed. Joseph de Voisin (Leipzig: F. Lanckisi, 1687), 269–94, 312–30. See also Nicholas de Lyra's *Quodlibetum de adventu Christi* (which already follows a long tradition of such academic “quaestiones”), printed in *Biblia Sacra cum glossis interlineari et ordinaria. Nicolai Lyranii postilla, ac moralitatibus, Burgensis additationibus & Thoringi replicis [...]*, 6 vols., (Venice: Societas Aquilae, 1588), 6:275–80.

³⁰ See the syllogism Gerónimo presents as the basis for the entire disputation in Pacios, *Tortosa* 2:1.22–3; and in his treatise, see *Maxima Bibliotheca*, 26:529–30; Del Valle, *Obras completas*, 2:7–12.

³¹ In Tortosa this question was debated in the first 26 sessions for three and a half months, but repeatedly brought up as well in the following sessions, until its conclusion.

at the disputation of Barcelona (1263) by the convert Pablo Christiani and mastered by Raymond Martini in his *Pugio fidei* (1278).³² At least in the context of the *Contra iudeos* literature, it turned rabbinic sources into *auctoritas* and thus into a popular and powerful tool for Christian polemicists.³³ At Tortosa this practice was clearly considered as the pinnacle of Christian polemical achievement, and an overwhelming amount of the Christian argumentation mined these rabbinic sources. As Gerónimo stated at one point, the *sensus doctorum* (i.e., the opinions and homilies of the Talmudists) was much more germane to the debate than the biblical texts upon which they reflected.³⁴ The third element was the poisonous condemnation of this very same Talmudic literature.³⁵ That Christians began using Talmudic legends as proof-texts in the thirteenth century did not imply that the anti-Talmudic tradition that evolved from the twelfth century and received papal approval during the “Paris trial” of the 1240s disappeared from the Christian polemic.³⁶ To the contrary, since

32 Funkenstein offered a fourfold classification of Christian polemic, using as a basis of distinction the literature and authority upon which a polemic was based: i. the Old Testament. ii. Philosophical reasoning. iii. against Talmudic literature. vi. using Talmudic sources to prove the truth of Christianity. Amos Funkenstein, “Basic Types of Christian anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages,” *Viator* 2 (1971): 373–82. And on the Christian use of rabbinic literature in the disputation of Barcelona see further in, Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 103–29; Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); David Berger, “The Barcelona disputation,” *AJS Review* 20, no. 2 (1995): 379–88. On the development of this polemical technique by Raymond Martini who included in his *Pugio fidei* hundreds of Hebrew citations (with Latin translations) from Talmudic and other rabbinic literature, see Chen Merchavia, “Pugio Fidei, an Index of Citations [Hebrew],” in *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the People of Israel Presented to Professor Haim Beinart on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Aharon Mirsky et al. (Jerusalem: The Ben-Zvi Institute, 1988); Cohen, *The Friars*, 122–70; Cohen, *Living Letters*, 342–58; Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), chap. 7.

33 On the identification of rabbinic sources as *auctoritates*, see Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, chap. 4; and see further below at notes 82–83.

34 Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:12.80.

35 According to Funkenstein, this was the third type of Christian polemic (see above, note 32). There is a vast literature on the consolidation of anti-Talmudic defamation in the twelfth century and its theological implications for the legal and religious status of Jews in the Christian world. See Cohen’s comprehensive discussion in, *Living Letters*, 147–313.

36 For the accusations laid against the Talmud in Paris, see Chen Merchavia, *The Church Versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature, 500–1248* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1970), chaps. 11–15; for the sources and their translations see, Robert Chazan, Jonathan

the late thirteenth century, Christian polemics conflated condemnations of the Talmud as a perverted and heretical doctrine that subverted the natural Law and incited anti-Christian hate with the notion that the corpus somehow contained Christian testimonies. This muddle of attitudes towards the Talmud was reflected at Tortosa, as the last seven sessions were dedicated to a harsh reprobation of rabbinic Judaism, expanding and elaborating on the charges that were brought in Paris against the Talmud.³⁷

The Jewish representatives at Tortosa relentlessly objected to these three pillars of the Christian polemic, arguing they were irrelevant to their fundamental rejection of Christianity.³⁸ Proof that the time of the messiah's advent had already passed, they explained, would not render Christianity more acceptable to them.³⁹ Their real difficulties with Christian doctrine did not lie with the prophetic calculations of the messiah's first advent, but rather with the tenets that he was both God and man, that he was born to a virgin and that he saved all of humanity by dying on the cross while Israel remained in exile. They repeatedly rejected the Christian use of Talmudic legends, claiming some to be forgeries, others mere allegories, and all devoid of doctrinal authority.⁴⁰

Friedman and Jean Connell Hoff, eds., *The Trial of the Talmud: Paris, 1240* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012). Among the many studies on the subject, see Cohen, *The Friars*, 51–99; Cohen, *Living Letters*, 317–34; Robert Chazan, “The Condemnation of the Talmud Reconsidered (1239–1248),” *American Academy for Jewish Research* 55 (1988): 11–30; the essays in Gilbert Dahan, ed., *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris, 1242–1244* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1999); and most recently, a study by Yosef Schwartz, who puts the process into the context of Christian scholastic developments in the University, “Authority, Control and Conflict in Thirteenth-Century Paris: Contextualizing the Talmud Trial,” in *Jews and Christians in Thirteenth-Century France*, ed. Elisheva Baumgarten and Judah D. Galinsky (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 93–110.

³⁷ The inherent contradiction between the two strategies is manifested even by the fact that Gerónimo addressed them in two separate treatises. On the accusations brought against the Talmud in Tortosa, see Moisés Orfali Levi, *El Tratado ‘De Iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut’ de Jerónimo de Santa Fe: introducción general, estudio y análisis de las fuentes* (Madrid: Instituto de Filología, Departamento de Estudios Hebreos y Sefardíes, CSIC, 1987) and Del Valle, *Obras*, 1:33–34.

³⁸ See Baer's description of the Jewish positions, in *A History*, 2:178–210, 2:224–29.

³⁹ See for example in the twenty-fourth session: *Ad illud quod prefatus magister Ieronimus inquit quod primo videamus an Messias per omnes spectatus venisset an non, tamquam id super quo questione principalis vertitur, etc., quod hec non est principalis question, quoniam in quam plurimis variisque questionibus gravitatis magne, et principalioribus, christianus et iudeus discordant*; Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:24.161.

⁴⁰ Already in the fourth session the Jews dismissed the authority of Talmudic legends, and they repeat variations on this assertion in most of the sessions that followed. See

And, as always, the Jews dreaded the consequences of a debate on the absurdities and crimes of the Talmud, and did everything in their power to avoid it.⁴¹ To their dismay, however, these reservations were all dismissed.⁴²

From a certain perspective, these aggressive Christian polemical tactics proved themselves useful. Gerónimo and Benedict could claim a decisive victory, and many Jews were indeed baptized under the dire circumstances of this disputation, spreading further despair and confusion among Jewish communities.⁴³ In addition, the process itself served as a justification for further coercive legislation against the Jews who remained steadfast in their refusal to convert, as prescribed in Benedict's papal decree, *Etsi doctoribus gentium*, which concluded the discussions.⁴⁴

There is no question as to Pablo de Santa María's familiarity with these events. He was a pivotal figure in the ecclesiastical and political circles that promoted the debate, and his son had a direct hand in executing the decrees that followed it.⁴⁵ In fact, his relationship with both Benedict and Gerónimo

examples in 2:4:40; 2:10:65; 2:16:110–13; and for their allegorical meanings, see 2:15:105; 2:13:91. Since Barcelona, this had been the standard Jewish defense (see Chazan, *Barcelona*, chap. 5). For the claims of "forgery," see examples in, 2:6:46–47; 2:10:66; 2:40:312–13; and further below, note 50.

⁴¹ See the admission of the Jewish speaker, Astruch Levi, who had neither the ability to defend the Talmud nor the intention of doing so. Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:67:593.

⁴² Not only did Gerónimo refuse to expand the scope of the discussion beyond his propositions, he even refers to the denial of midrashic authority as heretical. See for example, 11:73.

⁴³ On the impact of the disputation on the Jewish communities, see Frank Ephraim Talmage, "Trauma at Tortosa: The Testimony of Abraham Rimoch," *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985): 379–415; Ram Ben-Shalom, "The Disputation of Tortosa, Vincent Ferrer and the problem of the conversos according to the testimony of Isaac Nathan [Hebrew]," *Zion* 56 (1991): 21–54; Hyam Maccoby, "The Tortosa Disputation, 1413–14, and its Effects," in *The Expulsion of the Jews and their Emigration to the Southern Low Countries: (15th–16th C.)*, ed. Luc Dequeker and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: University Press, 1998), 23–34; Jeremy Cohen, "Tortosa in Retrospect: The Account of the Disputation in Salomon Ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehudah* [Hebrew]," *Zion* 76 (2011): 417–52.

⁴⁴ The decree was published several times, including in Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:597–608; Del Valle, *Obras completas*, 1:63–77; Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, 8 vols. (Toronto: Brepols, 1988–1991), 2:593–601.

⁴⁵ Pablo had close personal ties with all the key figures in the disputation: Ferdinand the Antequera (the king of Aragon, and see note 3); the convert Gerónimo de Santa Fe, who once called him "my teacher" (on the correspondence between them, see below), some of the Jewish delegates, and most importantly—Benedict. Pablo launched his Christian career under the patronage of Benedict in Avignon, and for a decade served as his loyal

has led historians to speculate that he was one of the masterminds behind the initiative, though his name is absent from the protocols.⁴⁶ While it is impossible to entirely rule out such a possibility, it can be said with certainty that fifteen years later he took a completely different path in the *Scrutinum scripturarum*, endorsing most of the Jewish reservations that were lodged at Tortosa.⁴⁷

The *Scrutinium*: Facing Jewish Polemic

A close reading of the *Scrutinium* reveals that the main elements of the Christian polemic to which the Jews objected in Tortosa were pushed to the margins or even discounted entirely. The question of the designated time of the messiah's advent dwindled in importance as Pablo presented the Christian case with surprising brevity, dedicating to the topic only about five percent

advisor and personal delegate. Eventually, however, Pablo's loyalty was given to the Crown of Castile and in 1416 he supported the deposition of Benedict. It is hard to judge their relations at the time of the disputation. See Netanyahu's colorful, though often speculative, description of how Pablo, lacking any "moral fiber," "discarded Benedict like an old glove." *The Origins*, 206. On the role of Pablo's son, Gonzalo, as the executer of papal bull that followed the disputation (regarding the confiscation of rabbinic books), see Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García*, 410–11.

⁴⁶ See for example in Netanyahu, *The Origins*, 204–05; and Del Valle in his introductions to the, *Obras completas*, 1:51, 2:xxxv–vi. The only account which attributes Pablo an active role in the disputation was composed in the 1430s by the Jewish Provençal scholar and leader, Isaac Nathan. See Ben-Shalom, "The Disputation of Tortosa," 27.

⁴⁷ There are two interesting references in Pablo's earlier writings that may suggest he would have supported a disputation that focused only on the question of the messiah's advent. In his Hebrew response to Joshua ha-Lorki (the future Gerónimo de Santa Fe), written a short while after his conversion, Pablo stated that since one of the fundamental principles of Judaism is a belief in the messiah, Jews are obliged to inquire whether the messiah has already come (in contrast to other Christian articles of faith). The correspondence is published in Leo Landau, *Das apologetische Schreiben des Josua Lorki an den Abtrünnigen Don Salomon ha-Lewi (Paulus de Santa María)* (Antwerpen: Teitelbaum and Boxenbaum, 1906), 16–18. On the polemical aspects of the correspondence, see Michael Glatzer, "Between Yehoshua Halorki and Shelomo Halevi: Towards an Examination of the Causes of Conversion among Jews in the Fourteenth Century [Hebrew]," *Pe'amim* 54 (1993): 103–16. Furthermore, in his biblical commentary (the *Additiones*) to Matt. 21, Pablo notes that since the Incarnation is proven only by the Christian traditions, Christians cannot expect to convince Jews on this matter. Hence, he suggests that Christians should argue with Jews only on matters pertaining to the time of the messiah's advent.

of the entire treatise.⁴⁸ Reluctant to repeat the familiar and excessive readings of the classic prophecies that predicted the coming of the messiah at the end of the Second Temple, he simply referred his readers to the works of Nicholas de Lyra and Raymond Martini.⁴⁹ Likewise, the use of Talmudic legends as a source for Christological testimonies was minimized dramatically, as the focus shifted from what Gerónimo called the *sensus doctorum* of Scripture, to its *sensus litteralis*. Pablo largely refrained from referring to rabbinic sources that the Jews claimed had no doctrinal authority, and in the few cases that he nevertheless did so, he carefully avoided versions that the Jews claimed to be forgeries.⁵⁰ And finally, the *Scrutinium* eschews the nearly ubiquitous anti-Talmudic accusations.⁵¹ Instead, already in the prologue to the *Scrutinium* Pablo put forward groundbreaking arguments in favor of the authenticity and authority of some rabbinic traditions, as he claimed that Jesus's instruction in Jon. 5:39, to "search the scriptures" (*scrutamini scripturas*—from which stems

⁴⁸ *Scrutinium*, 1.3.2–3.

⁴⁹ The fourth and last chapter of this section provides an original review of failed Jewish messianic calculations, which becomes a rare exposition of rabbinic history as Pablo arranges the sources according to chronological, geographical and disciplinary divisions. The *tannaim*, the first and highest Talmudic authorities after the prophets; their successors, the *amoraim*, a group of Talmudists of lesser authority; the *geonim* of "Asia," the most famous of whom was Sa'adiah Gaon; Maimonides from Egypt; Nahmanides from Gerona; and Gersonides from Provence. But most interestingly, in last the section of the *Scrutinium* (2.6.10) Pablo demonstrated that the calculations of the rabbis were not completely senseless, but predicted, without their understanding, events from the Christian history of salvation that stirred further conversions of Jews. See, also in Michael Glatzer, "Pablo de Santa María on the Events of 1391," in *Antisemitism through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog, trans. Nathan H. Reisher (New York: Vidal Sasoon International Center for the study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Pergamon Press, 1988), 134–35; Szpiech, "Scrutinizing History," 35–38.

⁵⁰ On these midrashim and the conflicting views about their authenticity, see Baer, *A History*, 1:185 n. 82; Saul Lieberman, "Raymund Martini and his Alleged Forgeries," *Historia Judaica* 5 (1943): 87–102; Alejandro Díez Macho, "Acerca de los *midrasim* falsificados de Raimundo Martí," *Sefarad* 9 (1949): 165–96; Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:364–68; Merchavia, "Pugio Fidei," 206–07; Visiers Lecanda, *El Scrutinium scripturarum*, 128 n. 5. For Pablo's different versions of talmudic sources that were accused as forgeries, compare the *Scrutinium* 1.8.12, 267 to Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:34.261; 44.370; and also *Scrutinium*, 2.3.14, 434–35 to Pacios, *Tortosa* 2:33.259; 2:44.367.

⁵¹ Pablo's hostile treatment of the Talmud in the *Scrutinium* is limited to a few brief remarks. Moreover, he assures his Christian readers that the Jews, despite their blindness, are not collectively guilty or suspect of any deliberate crime against Christians (other than blasphemy). See 2.6.2, 501.

the title of the work), referred not only to the Old Testament but also to the teachings of the rabbis that were preserved in the Talmud. Pablo knew very well that his reading of Jon. 5:39 directly countered Benedict's position at Tortosa, which declared the Talmud to be a "perverse doctrine invented by Satan after the coming of Christ."⁵² As against this, Pablo explained that while the "books of the Talmud" were indeed compiled in the fifth century, they contained a collection of rabbinic teachings, some of which predated Christianity, and it was to them that Jesus referred in the Gospels.⁵³ Eighty years later, Pablo's bold interpretation of John would stand at the center of the heated controversy between Johannes Reuchlin and the Dominicans of Cologne over the value and legitimacy of the Talmud.⁵⁴

While the *Scrutinium* shared the core Christological argumentation presented at Tortosa, in other fundamental respects it represented a break from the Christian polemical traditions. Instead of attacking the Talmud, exulting in Jewish self-contradictions and rehearsing polemical formulas built on Christian syllogisms and *quaestiones*, it aimed to establish, in an even tone and amicable tenor, the principles of the Christian faith as the final fulfillment of true Jewish principles. The burden of proof thus largely shifted from the Jews, who before had needed to account for the absurdities of their rabbinic beliefs, to the Christians, who were now obliged to provide an explication of Christianity's most difficult dogmas. In a rare display of Thomist scholarship and keen scriptural inquiry, Pablo elucidated the Christian doctrines of universal salvation through the suffering of the Messiah, the Original Sin, the Trinity, the Incarnation, the cult of the Virgin, and the virtues of the Eucharist. For that purpose, as some medieval missionaries have noticed, aggressive polemical formulas and venomous attacks against rabbinic Judaism were useless.⁵⁵

⁵² Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:69-598.

⁵³ See the prologue to the *Scrutinium*, 102.

⁵⁴ Reuchlin quoted extensively from the *Scrutinium* in his recommendation, but it was especially the commentary to John 5:39, and the suggestion that Jesus instructed to study the Talmud, that aroused the fury of the Dominicans of Cologne and inflated the famous affair. David H. Price, *Johannes Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131–32. Pablo's deep influence on Reuchlin and his preoccupation with Hebraic studies, is a subject worthy of a separate study.

⁵⁵ See Ramon Lull's (c.1232–1315) criticism against the uselessness of Raymond Martini's argumentation for proving the truth of Christianity to the infidels. Joachim Chorão Lavajo, "The Apologetical Method of Raymond Marti according to the Problematic of Raymond Lull," *Islamochristiana* 11 (1985): 155–77. While Pablo must have shared something of Lull's views on the insufficiency of Martini's argumentation, he proposed a very different alternative that was influenced much more by Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles*. On Lull's ideal

What was needed now was a genuine engagement with the Jewish objections to these Christian doctrines—that is, those that were silenced at Tortosa, but nevertheless flourished among Jews and converts.

In the face of the growing missionary efforts (and their success), Jews and even resentful converts developed anti-Christian disquisitions in a growing number of Hebrew tracts that were designed to deter fellow Jews and converts from genuinely adopting Christian beliefs. An elite of Aragonese and Castilian Jewish scholars, who spent much of their time in royal courts as administrators, physicians and astronomers, capitalized on their familiarity with both philosophical inquiry and Christian scholarship and produced a sophisticated anti-Christian argumentation.⁵⁶ These mostly Hebrew works, belligerent in tone, ridiculed Christian beliefs and strove to show the unbridgeable gap between contemporary Christianity and Jewish scriptural, devotional and philosophical values.⁵⁷

of missionary argumentation and the alternative medieval models, see Harvey J. Hames, *The Art of Conversion: Christianity and Kabbalah in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); and also Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, 134–36.

- 56 Among the most notable polemical works produced in ha-Levi's Jewish surroundings (before and after his conversion) we may count: *The Service of Faith* by Rabbi Moses ha-Cohen de Tordesillas; *A Test Stone* by Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut; *Be not Like Your Fathers* and *The Reproach of the Gentiles* by Profiat Duran, and perhaps also *Replies to the Wicked Men*; *The Refutation of the Christian Principles* by Hasdai Crescas; *Holy of Holies*, by Vidal Benveniste; *Bow and Shield* by Simon ben Zemah Duran; *The Book of Principles* (third section, chapter 25) by Joseph Albo; *Shield and Spear* by Hayyim ibn Musa.
- 57 There is a vast literature on the Jewish polemic of these years. See among others: Jeremy Cohen, "Towards a Functional Classification of Jewish Anti-Christian Polemic in the High Middle Ages," in *Religionsgespräche Im Mittelalter*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Friedrich Niewöhner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 93–114; Cohen, "Profiat Duran's *the Reproach of the Gentiles* and the Development of Jewish Anti-Christian Polemic," in *Shlomo Simonsohn Jubilee Volume: Studies on the History of the Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance Period*, ed. Daniel Carpi et al. (Tel Aviv: University, 1993), 71–84; Eleazar Gutwirth, "History and Apologetics in 15th century Hispano-Jewish Thought," *Helmantica* 35, no. 107 (1984): 231–42; the introduction in Talmage, *The Polemical Writings*; Hanne Trautner-Kromann, *Shield and Sword: Jewish Polemics Against Christianity and the Christians in France and Spain from 1100–1500*, trans. James Manley (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1993); Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain from the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, 3rd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Ben-Shalom, "Between Official and Private Dispute;" Daniel Lasker, *Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007); Lasker, "The Jewish Critique of Christianity: In Search of a New Narrative," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 6, no. 1 (2011): 1–9.

Pablo de Santa María was one of the few Christian scholars with personal knowledge of this Jewish polemic: prior to his conversion he had been a prominent member in the circle of scholars that produced much of these works. He may even have been an important actor in this Jewish intellectual effort, as he was known among his Jewish colleagues to have specialized in Christian writings “like no other Jewish sage of his time.”⁵⁸ Moreover, in the first years following his conversion, Pablo was a principal figure in the emerging literary scene of Hebrew correspondence between Jews and converts, coining a signatory Hebrew phrase—“formerly in Israel did not know God”—that would be used by future converts.⁵⁹ Accordingly, one of the most sarcastic and pungent anti-Christian writings—Profiat Duran’s epistle “Be not like your Fathers”—targeted him personally.⁶⁰

58 The letter of Joshua ha-Lorki, Landau, *Das apologetische Schreiben*, 3, 17. Some even suggested that ha-Levi wrote an anti-Christian tractate. See “La conversión del célebre talmudista Salomón Leví (Pablo de Burgos),” *Boletín de la biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo* 15 (1933): 425; Netanyahu, *The Origins*, 168, 1203 n.5. There may be a further hint to ha-Levi’s engagement in anti-Christian polemics in the responsum addressed to him by Isaac bar Sheshet Perfet (Ribash), which ends with the words: “And may the Lord make you the head [Deut. 28:13], and prepare your heart to inquire his law, to debate and to discuss, to learn and to teach, to speak and to listen, and to retrieve the secrets of the Torah. May you find ease in a trial which is a light to the nations, and he shall satisfy your soul in parched places [...]. For in writings a wise man is greater than a prophet [TB, Baba Batra 12a], in the battle of the Torah he shall rise as a lion; the excellent Don Solomon ha-Levi, may God protect and save him.” *וַיְכִין לְבָךْ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ לְדָרֹשׁ, לִישָׁא וּלְיִתְן וּלְפִלְפֵל, וּלְמִזְדָּחָה וּלְלִימָד, לְהַשְׁמִיעַ וּלְהַקְשִׁיבַ, וּנְצֹרֵר הַתּוֹרָה לְהַשִּׁיבַ, מִשְׁפָט לְאוֹר גּוֹם תְּרוּגָעַ, וּנְפֶשֶׁךְ בְּצָחָזוֹת שְׁבִיעַ. בְּנֶפֶשְׁךְ הַחֲשׂוֹבָה, וּנֶפֶשְׁ נָאָמֵן בְּרִיתְךְ, מִתְעָלָס בְּאַהֲבָתְךְ, צִחְקָק בְּרִבִּי שְׁשָׁת זְהָהָה שְׁעַל הַכְּתָב חֲכָם עֲדִיר מְנֻבָּא, בְּמַלחְמָתָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה כָּאַרְיִיתְנָשָׁא וּכְלַבְּיאָ, הַמְעוֹלָה דָּוִן שְׁלָמָה וְהַלְיוּ נָרִי*. Isaac bar Sheshet Perfet, *She’elot u-Teshuvot Bar Sheshet*, a reprint of the Vilna 1879 ed. (New York, 1954), sig. 192.

59 Pablo concluded his Hebrew response to Joshua ha-Lorki with the phrase: *פָנִים בִּישְׁרָאֵל לֹא יְדֹעַ אֶל*. Several years later, the convert Francesc de Sant Jordi signed his letter to the Jewish poet Solomon Bonafed with the same Hebrew words. Compare, *Das apologetische Schreiben*, 21 and Frank Ephraim Talmage, “The Francesc de Sant Jordi-Solomon Bonafed Letters,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 346. And see further on this Hebrew “interfaith letters” between Jews and converts; Abraham Gross, “The Poet Solomon Bonafed and the Events of His Generation [Hebrew],” in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, 2 vols., ed. Barry Walfish (Haifa: University Press, 1993), 1:35–62.

60 Frank Ephraim Talmage, ed., *The Polemical Writings of Profiat Duran: “The Reproach of the Gentiles” and “Be Not Like Unto Thy Fathers”* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Merkaz Z. Shazar, 1981); Maud Kozodoy, *The Secret Faith of Maestre Honoratus: Profayt Duran and Jewish Identity in Late Medieval Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 115–29; and see

The dialogical framework of the *Scrutinium* allowed Pablo to echo this kind of sophisticated Jewish argumentation. Several examples are in order. In section eight of the first book that discusses the abrogation of the Old Law, Saul pointed to the contradiction between the Christian aversion toward the Law of Moses and Jesus's own statement that he "did not come to abolish the Law" (Matt. 5:17). In response, instead of underlining the flaws of the Mosaic Law, Paul explained at length that Jesus fulfilled the Law and that Christians, despite Jewish opinion, still deeply respect the Law of Moses, consider it divine, and adhere to the fulfilment of its Ten Commandments.⁶¹ Upon hearing this, Saul lodged a series of accusations against Christian devotional practices, arguing that the worship of crucifixes and images of saints constituted forms of idolatry that were explicitly prohibited in the Decalogue, and that some of Jesus early followers never did abandon the Old Law, as told in Christian scriptures.⁶² Of course, there was nothing new in depicting Jewish scorn of Christian worship, but while this was usually presented as an expression of sheer Jewish hatred toward anything Christian, here it was backed by a critical examination of the Christian principles and sources themselves.⁶³ On other occasions the Jewish arguments expressed a similar condemnation of Church history. One such case is encountered in the seventh section of the first book, where Paul and Saul debate Daniel's visions of the statue and the four beasts (chapters 2

specifically on his references to Pablo, in Eleazar Gutwirth, "Religion and Social Criticism in Late Medieval Rousillon: An Aspect of Profayt Duran's Activities," *Michael* 12 (1991): 135–56; Yisraeli, "Constructing and Undermining"; and see there bibliography on Duran and his work.

61 Jewish polemicists of that time emphasized to their Hebrew readers that Christians treated the Law of Moses with the utmost contempt. Pablo's explanation of the Christian attitude to the Law is based largely on Aquinas's *Summa*, questions 90–108 in part 1/11.

62 See the Jewish arguments to which Pablo is responding here in Ḥasdai Crescas, *Sefer Bittul Iqqarei ha-Nozrim*, ed. Daniel J. Lasker, trans. Joseph Ben Shem Tov (Ramat-Gan: Universitat Bar-Ilan, Ben-Guryon, 2002), 77–90; Duran, *The Reproach of the Gentiles*, 28–29, 33. Pablo's answer relied on the Thomist distinction between different kinds of adorations, *adoratione duliae* and the *adoratione latiriae*, in the *Summa*, part III, q.25. On Pablo's treatment of the Christian worship of images in a wider context, see Felipe Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia, política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del cuatrocientos* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007), 88–98.

63 In Christian polemical context, such Jewish critiques of "image worship" appeared mostly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See examples in Anna Sapir Abulafia, "An Eleventh-Century Exchange of Letters between a Christian and a Jew," *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981): 153–74; idem, "The Ideology of Reform and Changing Ideas Concerning Jews in the Works of Rupert of Deutz and Hermannus quondam iudeus," *Jewish History* 7 (1993): 43–63.

and 7) that have been considered to be prophecies of the succession of temporal powers until the end of days. The two interlocutors interpreted the visions in accordance with their diverging exegetical traditions, Saul contending that Christianity was only one of the many transitory empires whose replacement was predicted by Daniel, and Paul identifying the Church with the final kingdom before the coming of the anti-Christ. But in chapters 7–9, the discussion takes a rather unexpected turn when Saul argues that the Christian Kingdom did not overthrow the Roman Empire (as Paul suggested), but rather stepped into its shoes through the Donation of Constantine. This exegetical point quickly evolves into an admonishment of the modern Church for establishing its rule on the temporal powers of the Roman emperor. Saul argues that by accepting this power the Church betrayed the apostolic ideals on which it was founded, thus conveying the basic claim of the new Jewish polemic that later generations of Christian corrupted the original message and values of Jesus and his disciples.⁶⁴ As Jews gained a stronger grip on the Christian Scripture, they were able to provide as well examples of linguistic corruptions and contradictions within the Gospels. Thus, to give one last example, in the second section of the second book, the teacher is asked to put to rest the murmurs of the Jews who point to the disparity between the extravagant cult of the Virgin in the Church, and her marginal, even disrespectful, representation in the New Testament.⁶⁵

These arguments, which indeed appeared in the Jewish polemic of the time, were presented in the *Scrutinium* as reasonable, rooted in historical, linguistic and rational thinking and surely not produced by grotesque Talmudic superstitions. Pablo eventually resolved all of these (and other) objections, affirming the validity of the Church's traditions and its loyalty to its origins. However, to do so, complicated theological and exegetical explanations had to be

64 For Jewish traditions that used this argument, see Ram Ben-Shalom, *Facing Christian Culture: Historical Consciousness and Images of the Past among the Jews of Spain and Southern France during the Middle Ages* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006), 154–207. In response, Paul explained that the power granted to the Church was merely circumstantial (rather than essential) to its spiritual authority. Hence, it did not change its character.

65 In 2.2.1–5, the disciple presents three “amazements”: (1) Why is the New Testament silent about Mary’s lineage and hardly mentions any of her deeds?; (2) Why is Joseph’s lineage so pivotal to the New Testament if he is not the father of Jesus?; and (3) Why does Jesus disparage Mary by referring to her as *mulier*? Notably, all of these “amazements” can be found in the Jewish polemics of the time. See Duran, *The Reproach of the Gentiles*, 46; and Crescas, *Sefer Bittul*, 68. And see also, Nicolás López Martínez, “Quoniam virum non cognosco’ (Porque no conozco varón),” *Cultura Biblica* 11 (1954): 333–35.

brought into play, which at times embarrassed the Christian side.⁶⁶ Grappling with these Jewish and converso voices implied a dramatic change in both the content and dynamic of the inter-religious dialogue, as it was now up to Christianity to justify the worship of crucifixes, its drift from the apostolic ideals, and the minuscule role of the Virgin in the Gospels.⁶⁷

Converso Voices Unveiled: Philosophical Judaism vs. Rabbinic-Christian Esotericism

More than anything else, however, it was a basic Jewish skepticism that stemmed from an overly rational ideal of religious belief that propelled in new directions the dialogue in the *Scrutinium*. Mirroring the tendency of Jewish polemicists to draw heavily on philosophical reasoning in their attempts to undermine the foundations of Christianity, the Jewish objections in the *Scrutinium* consistently required the rationalization of Christian dogmas, or at least their univocal admission in the Scripture. When he thought it suitable, Pablo indeed provided detailed scriptural and Thomistic explanations. Yet, from the very outset it was clear that he did not presume to resolve all Jewish doubts by rationalizing through philosophical methods the Christian positions or by providing irrefutable proofs from Scripture. Pablo acknowledged several times that this was simply impossible. He admitted that Christian argumentation suffered from one fundamental “limitation”: several articles of Christian faith cannot be proven by reason or Scripture alone. Some articles, like the salvation through the suffering of Christ—against which Saul invoked “Ockham’s razor”—require the suppression of the human intellect but can be drawn

⁶⁶ See for example 1.8.5, 249–52, in which Saul and Paul debate the meaning of the Hebrew word ‘olam. Saul is able to show that the Latin translation in the Vulgate is inconsistent and runs against the Christian argument. In the face of this critical examination of the Latin translation, Paul is forced to admit that the Vulgate’s wording is not relevant to the discussion, since it neither accords with the “Hebrew truth” nor with the Catholic one, but rather reflects the common language that Jerome used in order to make the Scriptures more accessible to the masses of his own day. Notably, previous Christian polemics ignored the problem in the Latin translation, as in the *Pugio fidei*, where Martini simply re-translates the Hebrew (see 3.3.11, 776–79). Likewise, at Tortosa, the Jews did not dare to bring up such an argument.

⁶⁷ In this sense, the dynamics between the two disputants in the *Scrutinium* fits more the typology of a “private” or “informal,” rather than “official” disputation. See Ram Ben-Shalom, “Between Official and Private Dispute,” 39–42; Ora Limor, “Polemical Varieties: Religious Disputations in 13th Century Spain,” *Iberia Judaica* 2 (2010): 55–79.

through a meticulous inquiry of the Old Testament,⁶⁸ whereas others, like the Trinity, the birth to a virgin and the sacrament of the Eucharist are so beyond the human mind that even the Jewish bible does not discuss them explicitly. For the fragile human intellect to accept such ideas, it would have to acknowledge that Scripture include unthinkable mysteries that could not be verified by any means other than faith and revelation. As in his Hebrew correspondence, Pablo argued against Jewish skepticism that reliance on reason alone did not help believers, but prevented them from reaching the most precious rewards and treasures of divine wisdom hidden in the Scripture.⁶⁹ In fact, this was the theological rationale behind the division of the *Scrutinium* into two dialogues: one with a Jew, to whom some Christian dogmas could not be proven, and the other with a convert, who was already committed to accepting, or at least to considering, the authority of the Church.⁷⁰ Of course, this premise rendered

68 *Scrutinium*, 1.5.8, 185; *In naturalibus enim operibus, quae a Deo sunt ordinata communiter dicitur, quod frustra fit per plura, quod potest fieri per pauciora.* The principle of parsimony was indeed applied by Jewish scholars and polemicists of the time; see for example Dror Ehrlich, *The Thought of R. Joseph Albo: Esoteric Writing in the Late Middle Ages* [Hebrew] (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2009), 178. See also how Paul reacts empathically to Saul's bewilderment on the issue of salvation through the suffering of Christ (1.5.6, 177): *Verum est indubie, quod hoc misterium de quo agimus, scilicet de modo redemptionis humanae per Christum est valde remotum a nostro naturali ingenio seu intellectu cum sit omnino supra naturam. Et ideo auctoritate sacra scripture fundari oportet illud quod veritas fidei nostre in hoc tenet. Ea enim que ex sola voluntate divina provenerunt supra omne debitum creature, sicut misterium redemptionis de quo agimus, nobis innotescere non potest nisi quatenus in sacra scriptura tradatur per quam divina voluntas nobis innotescit.*

69 On his Hebrew letter see below, note 86. However, Christians could argue that while their beliefs may not stem from reason, the two are not mutually exclusive. See for example the sixth chapter in the discussion of the Trinity, which aims to prove that: *quod non repugnas naturali rationi quod una et eadem res, sit trina et una.* Pablo begins the discussion by declaring that what is ordained by Scripture needs no confirmation from reason. Yet, in order to prevent Saul from boasting in arrogance (*ne forte in superbiam indicas*) he is willing to show that the idea of the Trinity does not contradict reason. *Scrutinium*, 299–300.

70 At the close of the first book, after Saul accepts the truth of Christianity, Paul explains how their conversation will differ from then on: "In what follows [i.e., the second book] you [Saul/the disciple] shall accept the authority of the New Testament just as you formerly accepted the authority of the Old Testament, for they were both given as a revelation by God. Likewise, you shall acknowledge the authority of our saints, whose teachings were purged in the fire of caritas, just as in the first part you recognized the Talmudic dictums that were burned in infernal fire, and that will appear occasionally also in the next part." Note the extraordinary parallel that Pablo draws between the Old Testaments/New Testament continuity and Talmudic/Ecclesiastical traditions, that we shall discuss in further detail below (*quod in sequentibus auctoritates novi testament accipias sicut antiquas*

irrelevant much of the anti-Christian philosophical argumentation of the Jews, and Pablo discussed the articles of the Virgin and the Eucharist without any recourse to philosophical-scientific substantiation.⁷¹

This hierarchical distinction between simple articles of belief attainable by the intellect and mysteries graspable through faith alone obviously had long roots in Christian theology.⁷² However, for Judaism to play the role of the intellect, traditionally associated in Christian literature with the “pagan philosopher,” was highly unusual. The Christian polemical conventions that took shape in the twelfth century had rabbinic Judaism representing precisely the opposite voice—that of utterly irrational beliefs stemming from superstitious traditions.⁷³ As Pablo sought to deal with the real Jewish polemic that was becoming highly philosophical, this Christian convention had to be overturned.

In accordance with this new polemical narrative, as the dialogue progressed and the theological issues became more complicated, the skeptical and rational suppositions of the Jews began to form the fulcrum of the debate. Indeed, Pablo identified this as the paramount feature in the failure of Jews to accept the Christian truth. He used two remarkable strategies to make his case against this rational skepticism. The first stressed that rabbinic Judaism, like the Church, was founded on extra-scriptural traditions, which presumed that some divine mysteries cannot be drawn from either Scripture or reason alone. For that purpose, Pablo invoked the arcane rabbinic doctrine of *ein dorshin* (do not expound or teach), that was formulated in the opening statement of

accipiebas. Utrunque enim est a deo datum seu revelatum. Similiter, auctoritates sanctorum nostrorum quorum eloquia sunt igne caritatis examinata recipias, qui primo talmudica dicta que in multis igne infernali succensa ut forte in sequentibus apparebit temerarie recipiebas. Et sic ad vota implenda deo duce procedamus.) Scrutinium, 1.10.9, 358.

71 For example, Pablo hardly addresses at all the anti-Christian philosophical argumentation of Hasdai Crescas. See, Crescas, *Sefer Bittul*, 60–68, 70–74; and see also in Shalom Zadik, “Rabbi Ḥasdai Crescas’s Critique of Aristotelian Science and the Lost Book of Abner of Burgos [Hebrew],” *Tarbiz* 77, no. 1 (2008): 133–55.

72 And most significantly (from the standpoint of Pablo de Santa María), it served also as the organizing theme for the internal division of both Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa contra gentiles* and Raymond Martini’s *Pugio fidei*. Aquinas designed his Summa to accord with these two kinds of possible truths, the first accessible by reason (Books 1–3) and the second transcending reason. Thomas S. Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas: An Interpretation of the Summa contra gentiles* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 8–10.

73 See above, note 35, as well as Funkenstein, “Basic Types;” Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in Dispute: Disputational Literature and the Rise of Anti-Judaism in the West*, (c.1000–1150), (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

the second chapter in tractate *Hagiga*. Prohibiting any public discussion of *ma'aseh bereshit* (the story of creation) and *ma'aseh merkavah* (the story of the divine chariot) this Talmudic statement served as the foundational text for the existence of a secret Jewish knowledge throughout the middle ages.⁷⁴ Naturally, the exact knowledge included in this instruction remained contested, but for Pablo it was the esoteric principle in itself that was to be commended as a Christological testimony. For example, when the two interlocutors discussed the Trinity, Saul claimed that Christian scriptural proofs were not decisive and could not support such a dramatic principle of faith. To this, Paul countered:⁷⁵

It is true that this mystery [of the Trinity] is one of the principle foundations of faith, but just as your great doctors say, the things that pertains to the foundation of faith were concealed in the Scripture, and they are not allowed to be taught or preached but only to one or two suitable [disciples]. Just as was written in the Talmudic book named *Hagiga*, in a chapter that begins with the words Ein dorshin, which means, “do not preach,”⁷⁶ and as was also recalled by Maimonides in the first book of his *Mishne Torah*, “The foundations of the Law,” chapter 4.

Similarly, Paul cited this Talmudic instruction when he defended his scriptural proofs of the incarnation (1.10.7):⁷⁷

⁷⁴ The second chapter of tractate *Hagiga* begins with the decree: “Do not expound the forbidden degrees [*arayot*] before three [persons], nor the story of Creation before two, nor the Chariot before one.” The “story of creation” was usually understood, in accordance to other passages in the Mishna, as referring to the opening chapters of Genesis, and the “story of chariot” to the first chapter of Ezekiel. On the significance of this passage to the development of Jewish esoteric traditions, see Moshe Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and its Philosophical Implications*, trans. Jackie Feldman (Princeton: University Press, 2007), 8–17.

⁷⁵ *Scrutinium*, 1.9.4, 296: *Verum est quod hoc mysterium [est] de principalioribus fidei fundamentis, sed ut magni doctores tui dicunt, illa quae ad fundamenta fidei pertinent, sunt occulte tradita in scripturis, nec erat licitum praedicare ea nec etiam docere, nisi tantum uni vel duobus idoneis ad hoc, prout habetur in libro Talmud qui dicitur Hagigia, in cap. Quod incipit En dorsim, quod significat non praeiudicabunt [sic] etc. quod colligitur a Rabbi Moyses in suo Deute. in I Lib. ti. de fundamentis legis; chap. 4.*

⁷⁶ In the Basel MSS, as well as in the printed editions of Mantua 1475 and Burgos 1591, the text reads *non praeiudicabunt*, which appears to be a scribe’s error.

⁷⁷ *Scrutinium*, 1.10.7, 350–51: *Ezechielis I cap. suae prophetiae, ubi ponitur illa revelatio magna de rotis et de animalibus, et de throno dei super sedentis quod quidem cap. prout communiter tradunt doctores tui continet magna seu maxima de mysteriis divinis in tantum quod erat illicitum apud eos exponere illud cap. in publicum seu pluribus hominibus, sed tantum uni*

All your doctors admit [that Ezekiel's prophecy in chapter 1] contains such divine mysteries that they forbid the explication of it in public or in front of many people, and they may only teach it to a single distinguished and capable disciple. Just as it is said in the Talmudic book called *Hagiga*, in the first chapter, on which Rabbi Moses the Egyptian elaborated in his book the *Guide to the Perplexed* [...].

In Pablo's view the ancient Jewish sages were right to conceal Christian secrets such as the truths of the Trinity (in the story of creation) and the Incarnation (in that of the divine chariot), since these were far too complicated to teach the primitive people without them falling into heresy.⁷⁸ These esoteric traditions could explain why Christian testimonies were found scattered in *midrashic* literature. Yet primarily, the Talmudic instruction of *Ein dorshin* served Pablo as proof that at the heart of rabbinic Judaism lies the notion that some articles of belief cannot be grasped by reason or scriptural inquiry, and require an additional form of revelation or oral instruction of arcane secrets from a reverend teacher. To amplify how conventional was this doctrine among contemporary Jews, Pablo noted that it was even found in the canonical writings of the Jewish philosopher Maimonides. He reiterated this point throughout the *Scrutinium*, illustrating that the rabbinic mechanism of *kabbalah* (in the literal sense of the term, as a form of oral tradition) encompassed the principles and practices of the Apostles and the Church with regard to the divine mysteries concealed in Scripture. According to Pablo, even the Apostles' instruction that new converts, like infants, should avoid consuming solid (spiritual) food, stemmed from the same esoteric rationale of the rabbis.⁷⁹ In other words, the primitive Church's command of divine mysteries was established upon the esoteric principles and

discipulo intelligenti et discreto, prout habetur in illo libro Talmudico qui dicitur Haguiga, primo cap. quod Rabbi Moyses Aegiptius large tractat in suo libro de directione [...]. In the Basel MSS and in other early printed editions the exact reference to Maimonides's *Guide* is missing, and instead there is a blank space, perhaps left for a Hebrew citation. In the 1591 edition, Sanctotis completed the reference to "chapters 61 and 62," which seems like a mistake, since there is no reference to *ein dorshin* in these chapters of the *Guide*.

78 Pablo justified the sages for keeping these mysteries a secret prior to the coming of Christ: *Haec mysteria rationabiliter prohibebantur dici explicite antiquis praesertim vulgaribus, 2.1.6, 367; and see the entire discussion in 2.1.5–6, 366–68.*

79 After quoting the Apostles at the beginning of the second book (see above, note 11), the teacher notes: *Antiqui etiam magistri Hebraeorum, ut credo nosti, hac ratione prohibebant, ne certi passus seu capitula sacrae Scripturae ab eis designati, in quibus magna mysteria fidei etiam secundum eos continentur, pluribus exponeretur, nec publice praedicaretur; Scrutinium 2.1.2, 361.*

traditions of the rabbis. Such an argument would have been nothing short of overwhelming for most Christian readers. For, while Christians had been citing Christological testimonies from Talmudic sources for almost two centuries, they had not considered the possibility of historical and theological kinship between the rabbis and the Church.

Importantly, the general notion of convergence between rabbinic and Christian teachings was not new among Jewish converts. A century earlier, the convert Abner of Burgos (to whom Pablo referred as *magnus biblicus philosophus et metaphysicus*,)⁸⁰ also claimed that rabbinic esoteric traditions mentioned in tractate *Hagiga* were meant to conceal Christian mysteries.⁸¹ It is even possible to assume that Jewish converts such as Pablo Christiani, who introduced the Christological content of rabbinic texts to the Christian world at Barcelona, held to similar views already in the second half of the thirteenth century. However, these ideas were not transmitted directly to Christian literature in the thirteen and fourteenth centuries. They either remained in the closed quarters of the Jewish world (as in the case of Abner who corresponded in Hebrew with his former co-religionists), or were mediated through a thick layer of Christian scholarship that was already committed to the condemnation of the Talmud as heretical doctrine. Under the Dominican “sponsorship” of Raymond de Peñaforte (d. 1275) and Raymond Martini, the rabbinic Christological teachings revealed by converts were subjected to the logic, syntax and ambitions of scholastic argumentation. This was organized around doctrinal questions rather than the coherency of the texts upon which it drew. Broken down into a list of proof-texts suitable for the dialectical methods of teaching and disputations, rabbinic citations functioned as *confessio adversarii*, or to use the terminology of Raymond Martini, they served to “strike the

80 *Scrutinium*, 2.6.14, 533; and Pablo quotes from Abner's *Belli domini*, in 2.6.10, 525.

81 See in his *Mostrador de Justicia*, 2 vols., ed. Walter Mettmann (Abhandlungen de Nordrhein Westfälischen akademie der Wissenschaften 92), (Opladen, 1994–96), 1:70, 2:48 and see also, Isaac Baer, “The Qabbalistic Doctrine in the Christological Teaching of Abner of Burgos [Hebrew],” *Tarbiz* 27 (1958): 278–89; Yosef Schwartz, “The Esoteric and Inter-Religious Aspects of the relation Philosophy/Kabbalah in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” *Studia Judaica* 16 (2008): 126–43, here at 133. On the difference between Abner's treatment of Jewish authorities and that of his Christian predecessors, see Ryan Szpeich, “Polemical Strategy and the Rhetoric of Authority in Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid,” in *Late Medieval Jewish Identities*, ed. Carmen Caballero-Navas and Esperanza Alfonso (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 55–76; Szpeich, *Conversion and Narrative*, chap. 5.

Jews with their own dagger.”⁸² As Nicholas de Lyra explained and Gerónimo de Santa Fe reiterated at Tortosa, the rules of dialectic allowed Christians to freely use Talmudic literature for polemical purposes while entirely rejecting its authority.⁸³ Thus, the historical and theological rationale behind this rabbinic-Christian correspondence dissipated, and the impact of the Christological testimonies on the authenticity and legitimacy of rabbinic knowledge as a proto-apostolic tradition, or as an ancient source of the Christian beliefs, was hardly ever considered. Their function as *auctoritas* was largely limited to the textual context of a *Contra iudeos* argumentation.⁸⁴ Pablo’s treatment of rabbinic esotericism implied, in contrast, they can be integrated into the historical scheme of Christian revelation.⁸⁵

The second strategy that Pablo applied in his rebuttal of Jewish skepticism toward Christian mysteries was the identification of the Jewish position with a kind of radical rationalism that subverted the principles of any scriptural religion, including Judaism itself.⁸⁶ Pablo established this claim through his

⁸² Among the hundreds of rabbinic citations in the *Pugio fidei*, the esoteric doctrine of *Ein dorshin* was mentioned not even once (see the index in Merchavia, “Pugio fidei.”). On Martini’s explanations for using rabbinic sources, see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 349–58; Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, 129–34.

⁸³ Nicholas de Lyra explains his polemical use of Talmudic literature, saying that although it is mostly false, it can nevertheless provide Christians effective and valid arguments against the Jews. For Lyra, Christian use of the Talmud is parallel to the Jewish use the New Testament. Both Jews and Christians can draw on their opponents’ sources for the sake of the argument while rejecting its authority: *Licet autem huiusmodi scripturae in magna parte sint falsae, scilicet, Thalmud et glossae doctorum Hebraicorum, tamen per eas possumus contra eos efficaciter arguere, ex quo sunt ab eis praedicto modo receptae. Sicut econtrario argumentum, quod facerent contra nos ex evangelio et scripturis apostolorum, huiusmodi esset efficax contra nos, licet reputent huiusmodi scripturas falsum continere* (*Quodlibetum VI:275*).

⁸⁴ See Szpiech’s discussion of the growing Christian appeal to rabbinic sources in the thirteenth century as a reflection of the “Dominican engagement with the problem of *auctoritas* within its theology,” in *Conversion and Narrative*, chap. 4.

⁸⁵ As mentioned above, Pablo indeed claimed that some rabbinic traditions were integral to the world in which Jesus lived and preached. See above, at note 54.

⁸⁶ Pablo’s anti-philosophic sentiment in the *Scrutinium* is in line with the views he expressed a short time after his conversion in his Hebrew letter to ha-Lorki, where he stresses the supremacy of faith over intellect. He condemns the Averroist denial of providence and the eternity of the soul as the main obstacle preventing believers from attaining religious perfection. In this criticism, Pablo clearly alludes to the increasing Jewish philosophical skepticism regarding the ability of the individual soul to achieve immortality. See in Landau, *Das apologetische Schreiben*, 16–18; and also in Maurice Kriegel, “Autour de Pablo

multiform representations of Maimonides as the supreme rabbinic authority (quoting the famous aphorism that depicted him as second only to Moses the Legislator: “from Moses to Moses there arose none like Moses”),⁸⁷ and as the archetype of normative Judaism.⁸⁸ Like Raymond Martini and Gerónimo de Santa Fe, Pablo invoked the authority of Maimonides as a Jewish rabbi, philosopher and biblical scholar in order to confirm various “Christian” ideas, and, most importantly, the notion that a higher allegorical meaning is inhered to Scripture.⁸⁹ Yet, on several occasions, Pablo exceeded this polemical convention as he invoked the views of Maimonides to exemplify the fundamentally philosophical nature of the Jewish infidelity and rejection of Christianity. For instance, at one point Pablo describes the Maimonidean understating of divine attributes as purely equivocal; a dangerous abstraction of God’s scriptural qualities that denies believers a proper model of devotional imitation.⁹⁰ These Maimonidean formulations of “negative theology,” were branded radical and subversive of religious principles not only by Jewish kabbalists such

de Santa María et d’Alonso de Cartagena. Alignement culturel et originalité converso,” *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 41 (1994): 197–205.

87 *Scrutinium*, 1.3.4, 148: [...] *qui tantae auctoritatis fuit inter eos ut a maiori parte Iudeorum dicitur proverbialiter, quod a Moyses legislator usque ad Moysen Aegyptium non surrexit sicut iste Moyses.*

88 Maimonides is the most frequently quoted rabbinic authority in the *Scrutinium*, cited approximately forty times. Thirty of these instances are accompanied by paraphrases or quotations. In addition, many more arguments that were put into the mouth of the Jewish-convert interlocutor were apparently taken from Maimonides without a specific attribution. For a general review of medieval Latin references to Maimonides (but not of the *Scrutinium*), see Görge K. Hasselhoff, *Dicit Rabbi Moyses: Studien zum Bild von Moses Maimonides im lateinischen Westen vom 13. Bis zum 15. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2004).

89 On Martini’s treatment of Maimonides see, Hasselhoff, *Dicit Rabbi Moyses*, 227–44; Hasselhoff, “Some Remarks on Raymond Martini’s (c.1215/30–c.1284/94) Use of Moses Maimonides,” *Trumah* 12 (2002): 133–45.

90 *Scrutinium*, 2.6.8, 518: *Et attendem quod non solum antiqui Talmudici in cognitione divinorum sepe errauerunt, sed etiam eorum moderni magni Rabbini, inter quos praecipuus est Rab. Moyses Aegyptius, [...] et qui quasi per viam pharisicam et expositionem sacrae scripturae tendere videtur. Cum hoc tamen in multis erravit quae ad cognitionem pertinent divinorum, ut cum asserit omnia nomina quae [BI 1 17: deo] de Deo et creaturis dicuntur, esse mere aequivoqua. Ex quo sequeretur quod nulla de Deo haberemus veram notitiam. Similiter cum alios errores in suis codicibus ponit periculosos, de quibus supra aliquid est tactum.* And compare to the *Guide* 1.51–60. On Maimonides’ “negative theology,” see Ehud Z. Benor, “Meaning and Reference in Maimonides’ Negative Theology,” *Harvard Theological Review* 88, no. 3 (1995): 339–60.

as Nahmanides and by many of Pablo's Jewish contemporaries, but also by Christian theologians of the thirteenth century.⁹¹ However, these Christian theologians refuted Maimonides as an Aristotelian philosopher, and not as a Jewish polemicist. Taking a different tack, Pablo turned these philosophical positions of Maimonides—condemned both by Christians and many Jews—into a typical “Pharisaic” perfidy that prevented Jews and converts from fully embracing Christianity. The Jewish rejection of Christian mysteries, hence, stemmed from a dangerous philosophical skepticism.

Pablo's identification of rabbinic esoteric traditions with Christian principles, as well as his representation of Jewish perfidy as an expression of radical Maimonidean philosophy, epitomize how shrewdly his polemic paralleled the intellectual clashes and spiritual crises that were cleaving the Jewish world at that very moment.

The so-called “Maimonidean controversies” of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries hotly debated the study of philosophy (associated with Maimonides above all others) over traditional rabbinic authority. Opponents of philosophy alleged that Maimonides's rationalization of faith (or at least that of his more radical interpreters) subverted the traditional authority of the rabbis and undermined religious principles such as divine providence, the eternity of the soul, and the principle of reward and punishment. The controversies did not prevent philosophical studies and practices from becoming an instrumental tool of Sephardic rabbinic scholarship in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, but on the pretext of 1391 and the calamities that hit Iberian Jewry, the anti-Maimonidean arguments gained new relevancy and momentum. Now, not only the anti-rationalists, but even the Jewish scholars who were trained in philosophy and used it in their polemics against Christianity blamed radical forms of philosophy and its Maimonidean expressions for the decline of Jewish religiosity, and consequently for the mass conversions to Christianity.⁹² One of

⁹¹ On the reception and rejection of these ideas by Christian theologians see, most importantly, the studies of Yossef Schwartz: “The Esoteric and Inter-Religious Aspects,” 135–39; “*To Thee is Silence Praise*: Meister Eckhart's Reading in Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publisher, 2002), 50–55, 59–61, 201–18; “Meister Eckhart and Moses Maimonides: From Judaeo-Arabic Rationalism to Christian Mysticism,” in *A Companion to Meister Eckhart*, ed. Jeremiah M. Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 2013). And also Mercedes Rubio, *Aquinas and Maimonides on the Possibility of the Knowledge of God: An Examination of the quaestio de attributis*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

⁹² Ribash, Hasdai Crescas, Menahem ben Zerah, Profiat Duran, Hayyim Ibn Musah, Solomon Al'ami, Shem Tov Ibn Shem Tov and others all noted in one way or another that the growing acceptance of philosophical ideals was weakening faith among the Jews and undermining Judaism's most basic fundaments. While some of them (as Crescas) ascribed the

the distinctions that these scholars drew between their own legitimate mastery of philosophy and scientific learning (which they eagerly applied against Christianity) and the deplorable forms of radical philosophy that endangered Judaism regarded the principle acknowledgment that Judaism had a trans-rational foundation. Occasionally, this concern was articulated through the interpretation of *ein dorshin*. While all agreed that *ein dorshin* spelled out a Jewish esoteric principle, opinions differed as to whether these secrets concealed philosophical truths that could be revealed through scientific learning and philosophical speculation, or that they were mysteries that could only be attained through revelation and its oral transmission, i.e., through *kabbalah*.⁹³

Let us take, for the moment, two of the most vocal Jewish antagonists of Christianity in this period: the celebrated philosopher Hesdai Crescas, who wrote a systematic philosophical critique of Christian dogma, and his pupil Joseph Albo, who was one of the Jewish participants at Tortosa.⁹⁴ Crescas, dedicated a special section in his book, *Or Adonai* (Light of the Lord), to the argument that the arcane traditions of *ma'aseh bereshit* and *ma'ashe merkavah* alluded not only to the esoteric nature of that particular knowledge, but also to the means of obtaining it through *kabbalah* rather than philosophical

hazards of radical philosophy directly to Maimonides, others (as Profiat Duran) were holding his radical followers who misrepresented his views, to blame. It was on the basis of such testimonies that Issac Baer came to his famous conclusion that Jewish "Averrosim" was one of the root causes for the mass conversions in the Peninsula. For many years, critics of Baer argued that no evidence existed for such a strand of Jewish radical philosophy, let alone one that had a wide influence on the Jewish population. See for example, Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, *Continuity and Variety* [Hebrew], ed. Joseph R. Hacker (Tel Aviv, 1984), 198–239. However, Dov Schwartz identified a circle of late fourteenth century neo-Platonic scholars in the Iberian Peninsula and Provence that professed such radical opinions, and was probably the target of the mounting anti-philosophical criticism. Dov Schwartz, "The Spiritual and Religious Decline of the Jewish Community in Spain at the End of the 14th Century [Hebrew]," *Pe'amim* 46 (1991): 92–114; Schwartz, *The Philosophy of a Fourteenth Century Jewish Neoplatonic Circle* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik, The Ben-Zvi Institute, 1996).

⁹³ As Yossef Schwartz noted, the boundaries between Philosophy and Kabbala in the middle ages were in practice often tenuous. Yet, nevertheless, while Philosophy represented a universal, trans-cultural phenomenon, kabbalah, through the notion of tradition, always marked an exclusively internal Jewish phenomenon. See Yosef Schwartz, "The Esoteric and Inter-Religious Aspects," 126–29; and the examples in the pages that follow. On the division between kabbalistic and philosophical esoterism see Moshe Halbertal, *By Way of Truth: Nahmanides and the Creation of Tradition* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 2006), 330–33.

⁹⁴ See above, note 55.

study.⁹⁵ And his pupil, Albo, advocated at length in his *Sefer ha-Ikarim* (Book of Principles), the essentiality of revelation and tradition for the core principles of the Jewish faith.⁹⁶ For both these Jewish philosophers, whom Pablo knew personally, the mechanism of *kabbalah* represented the basic and crucial acknowledgment of the limits of philosophical speculation, and ensured the stature of rabbinic tradition—even though they themselves did not engage in the study and practice of Kabbalah (in the sense of the esoteric traditions). It is therefore not surprising that in a similar vein, they all criticized Maimonides' position on the divine attributes as well.⁹⁷

Pablo's polemical strategies in the *Scrutinium* corresponded closely to these internal Jewish deliberations, granting them an unexpected Christian flavor. The logic used by Pablo's former colleagues to defend rabbinic authority was now applied to the extra-scriptural traditions of the Church, and their internal criticism of radical (Maimonidean) philosophy was transformed into an anti-Jewish argument. While Jewish scholars believed that the most severe consequence of religious decline was conversion to Christianity, Pablo implied that it was this spiritual decay and subversion of religious tradition that prevented Jews (and converts) from embracing the Christian faith. Following this logic, the Jewish dismissal of Church traditions was not substantially different from the stand that radical Jewish philosophers were allegedly taking against rabbinic authority.

OVERTURNING POLEMICAL TRADITIONS: THE CASE OF MAIMONIDES AND THE SACRIFICES

I will conclude this very broad presentation of the new polemical dynamic in the *Scrutinium* with a brief look at how it realigned rabbinic traditions with regard to one Christian-Maimonidean polemical convention.

Maimonides claimed in his *Guide to the Perplexed* that the precepts of the sacrifices were commanded to Israel only in order to combat the idolatrous

95 Hesdai Crescas, *Sefer Or Adonai* (Ferrara, 1555; a reprint, Jerusalem, 1970), 4:10; Yossef Albo, *Sefer ha-Ikarim*, 4 vol., trans. Isaac Husik (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 1:17; and also in Dov Schwartz, *Contradiction and Concealment in Medieval Jewish Thought* [Hebrew] (Bar-Ilan: University Press, 2002), 182–96.

96 Albo, *Sefer ha-Ikarim*, 1:17.

97 On Crescas' positions, see Warren Zev Harvey, "Bewilderments in the Theory of Attributes of Hasdai Crescas" [Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 8 (1997): 133–44; Albo, *Sefer ha-Ikarim*, 2:22.

practices that were common in their primitive surroundings. In themselves, the sacrifices had no devotional or spiritual value, and thus as Israel grew strong and became assured of its monotheistic belief they were destined to be annulled.⁹⁸ Among medieval Jews, this represented a quintessential example of the grave implications that philosophical ideals could have on the practical aspects of Judaism, i.e., the observance of the commandments. If Maimonides were right, biblical commandments might evolve, change or simply be repudiated. For that reason, prominent Jewish scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries harshly censured Maimonides on this point. The most notable of those critics was, again, Nahmanides, who dismissed this explanation as “nonsense” that “pollutes God’s table,” and ascribed to the sacrifices an esoteric inner mystical purpose.⁹⁹ The Maimonidean notion was enthusiastically endorsed, however, by Christian polemicists, who then turned it against the Jews. As was suggested first in the *Pugio fidei* and later by Gerónimo de Santa Fe at Tortosa, it constituted an undeniable rabbinic admission of the temporality of the commandments and their eventual abrogation.¹⁰⁰ In sum, it rendered invalid the Jewish claim that the Law of Moses was eternal. But despite this polemical tradition and its apparent appeal, the Maimonidean position was not mentioned at all in the eight sections of the *Scrutinium* that address the abrogation of the Old Law. Instead, it was brought up in a different context and from the opposite perspective.

In the third section of the second book, the teacher and the disciple discuss the Sacrament of the Altar. Among other things, the teacher explains—in the footsteps of Aquinas—that the Eucharist, like the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, is a perfect realization of the scriptural ideal of sacrifice. In this context, it is the converso disciple who brings up the Maimonidean stance, noting that it counters the comments of the teacher. If, as Maimonides claimed, the only value of the sacrifices was educational, what good does the Christian

⁹⁸ Part III, chap. 32, 46; and see also Russell Jay Hendel, "Maimonides' attitude toward sacrifices," *Traditio* 13, no. 4 (1973): 163–79.

⁹⁹ See Nahmanides commentary to Lev. 1:9: [...] והנה הם בבריהם [...] ובמיוחד שבר גדור וקושרא רבה על נקלה, יעשו שולחן ה' מגואל שאינו רק להוציא [...] Among the Sephardic scholars who vocally refuted Maimonides on this issue were Solomon Ibn Aderet, Menahem ben Zerah. See also Roy Pinchot, "The Deeper Conflict between Maimonides and Ramban over the Sacrifices," *Traditio* 33, no. 3 (1999), 24–33; Dov Schwartz, "From Theurgy to Magic: The Evolution of the Magical-Talismal Justification of Sacrifice in the Circle of Nahmanides and His Interpreters," *Aleph* 1 (2001), 165–213.

¹⁰⁰ Martini, *Pugio*, 3:3.12, 809–13; Santa Fe, *Ad convincendum*, 540; Pacios, *Tortosa*, 2:33–34.253–66; 2:44.368–88.

materialization of the sacrifice serve? Thus, in the following chapter, the teacher is made to disprove and reject Maimonides's reasoning on the sacrifices (*de errore rabi Moyses circa reddendam causam sacrificiorum*), using arguments similar to those offered by Maimonides's Jewish adversaries.

From the unique converso perspective of the *Scrutinium*, the Maimonidean de-mystification of divine commandants was as much a threat to Christianity as it was to Judaism. It undermined the sublime merits of the Eucharist in the same manner that it subverted Jewish Law. Nahmanides's view, that the sacrifices had a mystical purpose that could never be abrogated, was in far greater accord with the Christian sacramental ideal. When the Christian polemic turned from a scholastic refutation of Jewish positions to an incorporation of them within Christianity, it turned out that the "authentic" rabbinic traditions, with their strong esoteric foundations, were much more compatible with Church teaching than was the strictly philosophical inquiry of Maimonides.

Conclusion: From Scholastic Polemics to a Converso-Jewish Dialogue

The *Scrutinium scripturarum* enfolds an important testimony to the polemical exchange that developed between Jews and converts at the dawn of converso society. It gives a first Latin account of the Jewish campaign (known to us through Hebrew writings) to combat conversion and assimilation to Christianity by "exposing" the self-contradictory and ridiculous beliefs that oblige Christians. To judge by the *Scrutinium*, these strategies indeed applied an affective pressure, stirring doubts in the hearts of converts and averting them from fully endorsing their new Christian identity. More importantly, the *Scrutinium* provides an invaluable first-hand account of the missionary ideology and polemical strategies of the rival converso party, which pushed for the spiritual assimilation of converts and of which Pablo de Santa María was the most accomplished representative. The crux of this ideology was that Christianity perfectly materialized Jewish ideals, bringing to the fore of the religious polemic Christian teachings that confirmed the *concordia* between the two biblical covenants. At its peak, it even claimed the alignment of rabbinic esotericism and Christian extra-scriptural traditions as a single chain of arcane knowledge against radical philosophy and Jewish skepticism.¹⁰¹ This approach

¹⁰¹ In light of the *Scrutinium*, we can better understand Profiat Duran's caustic critique of Pablo's teaching as folly disguised beneath a cloak of mystery. As well, we now see that Duran's emotional cry to converts, that Pablo's teachings marked a complete break from

implied that conversion from Judaism to Christianity did not require a complete replacement of old beliefs or identities, but only their perfection, and it may enable us to better understand the religious tensions in the Peninsula and the emergence of a distinct converso religious identity in the following decades.

Unsurprisingly, the polemical dynamics stemming from the mass conversions and the Jewish-converso circumstances that followed it substantially differed from a Christian polemic that often had little interest in its actual Jewish counterparts, and even less in the spiritual integration of the converts it allegedly attempted to win. Indeed, in the thirteenth century, new missionary aspirations were injected (together with a blend of apologetic urgency, inquisitorial condemnation and intellectual allure) into Christian anti-Jewish polemics. Yet, these never replaced the traditional functions of the genre as a means for formulating Christian doctrines and self-perceptions.¹⁰² Whatever the precise blend of motivations that drove these developments, by the end of the thirteenth century, the scholastic mechanisms of knowledge and authority took the reins of the genre, constructing a polemical language that would serve both missionary and apologetic or educational purposes—even though they were hardly identical. Nowhere was this polemical duality more manifest than in Christian attitudes toward rabbinic traditions. Paradoxically, Christian polemics entangled Talmudic literature as a source for polemical proofs with its incrimination as a ludicrous quasi-heretical perversion that threatened Christian society. The result, as displayed at Tortosa, was that as much as Christians intensified their demands for conversion on the basis of rabbinic testimonies, so did they propagate the anti-Christian features of rabbinic Judaism and aggravate anti-Jewish animosities.

their Jewish familial and intellectual heritage, was a response to Pablo's claims of harmonious continuity between Jewish and Christian identity. See, Yisraeli, "Constructing and Undermining," 195.

¹⁰² While the studies of Robert Chazan stressed (in different ways) the role that the new missionary ambitions of the Friars played in the polemical developments of the thirteenth century, in the past few years, other studies have shifted to emphasizing the internal Christian motivations that propelled Christian scholars to engage so closely with rabbinic literature. See Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: University Press, 2009); Harvey J. Hames, "Reason and Faith: Inter-Religious Polemic and Christian Identity in the Thirteenth Century," in *Religious Apologetics—Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. Yosef Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 267–84; Hames, "Truly Seeking Conversion?: The Mendicants, Ramon Llull and Alfonso de Valladolid," *Morgen-Glantz* 20 (2010): 41–61. Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, 126–27.

In the wake of the converso crisis, this estrangement of Judaism and Christianity was also the goal of the aggressive Jewish polemic. Ironically, those two rival polemical movements jointly intensified the sense of Jewish-Christian dichotomy that prevented converts from fully embracing Christianity, and that stirred anxieties and suspicions among Old Christians toward the inherited anti-Christian qualities of the Jewish converts.

As the *Scrutinium* sought new strategies to stress the deep commitment of Christianity to its Jewish histories, it not only responded to the Jewish campaign, but also curbed the aggressive tendencies of the Christian polemic. When Pablo demonstrated that the claim of the Church of an extra-scriptural authority was in harmony with rabbinic esoteric ideals, he was directly confronting the common Christian view that construed rabbinic tradition as an essentially anti-Christian and anti-Jewish (in the biblical sense) perversion. Thus, although the *Scrutinium* highlighted the negative impact that Jewish influence had on conversos, it did not (as was done at Tortosa) provide a theological ground for anti-Jewish policies. In fact, it expanded the Augustinian “witness doctrine” that provided the theological legitimacy for Jewish existence among Christians to encompass rabbinic Judaism. It is likely that these ideas did not stem solely from Pablo’s concern for the Jews, but also from his profound conviction that the image of Judaism was tightly connected to the status of converts in Christian society, and that the de-legitimization of the former necessarily implied a rejection of the latter.

Given its eventual textual agency, the particular polemical realities that underlay the *Scrutinium* could prove important to our understanding of the intellectual impact generated by the converso phenomenon. In the context of the converso crisis, the *Scrutinium* was read and appraised, well into the seventeenth century, for its effectiveness on relapsing converts.¹⁰³ But for its wide and enthusiastic Christian audience outside the Peninsula, the *Scrutinium* formulated doctrines that expanded Christian confessional boundaries to include further Jewish components. In this sense, it serves not only as a testimony of how distinct converso voices were consolidated, but also how they were heard well beyond the orbit of converso society.

¹⁰³ Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Study of Issac Orobio de Castro* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1982), 77, 102–04; Maurice Kriegel, “Le marranisme: Histoire intelligible et mémoire vivante,” *Annales* 57 (2002): 328–29.

CHAPTER 7

The Rabbi and the Mancebo: Arévalo and the Location of Affinities in the Fifteenth Century

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Abstract

The background to this paper is the difference between occasionally atemporal and multinational approaches and local, historical approaches to religious ideas and encounters. The chosen example is that of two authors from one town (Arévalo) and one historical moment (fifteenth-century Castile). The article attempts firstly to identify stylistic, rhetorical, and literary elements in the historiographic traditions about the reputation of the town. Secondly it points to the changes in the status of the town in the late Middle Ages that affected Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Thirdly, after identifying certain tendencies in the writings of the two authors from the town, one Muslim (known as the Mancebo de Arévalo) and the other Jewish, Rabbi Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq de Arévalo, it searches for affinities and common elements in their attitudes.

Keywords

fifteenth-century castile – Hispano-Jewish-Muslim relations – coexistence – Arévalo – local traditions

Some time ago it was suggested that it was possible to speak about late medieval Hispano-Jewish polemics with a certain degree of coherence. This coherence of Hebrew texts produced in late medieval Christian Spain can be referred to as history or historical context. That is to say that the approximation to the texts and ideas of the old Judeo-Christian polemic is assisted rather than hindered by taking into account the various specific factors—economic, legal, fiscal, institutional, cultural—of their period and place. Once this is understood it is possible to search for common features of the polemic

in a specific period and place. It was argued that—alongside the more universal, transnational differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam—it was possible to detect other aspects of the polemical and apologetic corpus. Amongst these there was, to mention one example—possibly constructive and indeed innovative—the field of the history of reading and more particularly reading historically, critically, philologically, or in a way which adumbrated the later, more clearly and obviously humanist modes. The cases of Ephodi in Perpignan, Ibn Musa in Salamanca, and Simeon b. Zemah, the scholar born in Mallorca showed that the empirical similarities in the common specific geography and chronology were paralleled, to some degree, by an intellectual affinity in their apologetic writings.¹ This emphasis on the positive went against the grain of the typical *modus operandi* in some histories of the Jews, more precisely in the multivolume, “universal” histories (Graetz, Dubnow, Baron, etc.). In some cases (Benzion Dinur)² such multinational historians explicitly advocated an emphasis on non-local similarities and a marginalization of geographic differences.

Originality seems to be the trademark of the other extreme: the local history of the Jews, where so many new, previously unpublished documents and data are constantly being revealed. And yet, the local is not always free from tradition, poetics, and ubiquitous traces of an anthropomorphic approach. These traditions, poetics and anthropomorphisms go from the formulaic diction of the ballads [Zamora *la bien cercada*,] through local history book titles [*la muy noble y leal villa ...*] to lyrical masterpieces [*Soria fria, Soria pura, cabeza de Extremadura ...*].

I

In the region of La Moraña,³ and unlike many other localities, Arévalo had a reputation. Numerous examples of Arévalo’s reputation may be produced. These will be found particularly in writings on Isabella and her childhood. There is no need to refer to recent followers of a tradition of

¹ Eleazar Gutwirth, “History and Apologetics in Fifteenth-Century Hispano-Jewish Thought,” *Helmantica. Revista de filología clásica y hebrea* 35, no. 107 (1984): 231–42.

² Benzion Dinur, *Yisrael ba-Gola: megorot ve-te’udot* [Israel in the Diaspora: Sources and Documents] 10 vols. (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem: Dvir, Bialik, 1958–72).

³ Juan José de Montalvo, *De la historia de Arévalo y sus sexmos* (Valladolid: Imprenta Castellana, 1928).

such manifestations of “reputation” because it may be shown to have existed for some time. Indeed we come across such a depiction of Arévalo in a 1915 English book on Isabella, the Catholic Queen, where we read about “the old walled town of Arévalo” and are told that Isabella’s mother “lived in an atmosphere rendered doubly retired by her own permanent ill-health.” That is to say that the town’s isolation and the queen’s mental illness, depression, or melancholy is somehow related in Irene Lifford Plunket’s book, *Isabel of Castile and the Making of the Spanish Nation, 1451–1504*.⁴ Lifford Plunket is by no means the only author to invoke the image of Arévalo’s isolation. She could assert this without a second thought because it had been done many times and long before. Caleb Cushing in 1833 writes: “Here she [Isabella] had completed her fourth year, her father died, and the imbecile Don Enrique, on succeeding to the crown, left Isabella and her mother to languish in poverty and obscurity in the seclusion of the royal country house of Arévalo.” Further on, we read: “But what a scene was there for the pure and ingenuous recluse of the walls of Arévalo!”⁵

We are dealing, then, with the poetics of the descriptions of a town. As is usual in the case of topoi, a search for the antecedents seems natural. It can in fact be traced to the Middle Ages. The evidence for an early date for the image (rather than reality) of isolation comes from a fortuitous remark. It does not come from a systematic search for the city’s “character.” It comes from the prologue/dedication of a book. Sánchez de Arévalo’s *Suma* (1453) was dedicated to Don Pedro de Acuña, señor de Dueñas y Buendía, *guarda mayor* and counselor of Enrique IV. Sánchez de Arévalo is known as a politician, diplomat, and humanist. He cultivated music and dialectics and was a friend of Eneas Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II. According to him, Arévalo was “desierta.” The reference is to a political meeting in Arévalo. The meeting and therefore the book are rhetorically enhanced in the book’s preface by allusion to the “town and country” motif. The country represents tranquility and therefore careful, measured deliberation and well-thought-out political decisions, such as those

⁴ Irene Lifford Plunket, *Isabel of Castile and the Making of the Spanish Nation, 1451–1504* (New York, London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1915).

⁵ Caleb Cushing, *Reminiscences of Spain: The Country, Its People, History, and Monuments*, 2 vols. (Boston: Carter, Hendee and Co., 1833) 1:243. See also William Hickling Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic, of Spain*, 2 vols. (London: Bentley, 1838), 1:189: “on her father’s death she retired with her mother to the little town of Arévalo, where she lived *in seclusion*;” emphasis mine.

taken at that meeting.⁶ If we accept the isolation as a *topos* and the view of the *Suma* as a kind of foundational statement of “city character” we may proceed in its explication. What must be borne in mind is that this precise construction is unrelated to the realities of the road systems, demography, or strategic importance. It appeals to a hoary *topos* of literary and theological writings known as *otium/negotium*, traceable ultimately to Greco-Roman sources. Augustine thought that *otium philosophandi* was a positive aspect of life and wrote about *otium* as a prerequisite for contemplation. Petrarch thought of solitude (i.e., rural settings, *villa otium*, Vaucluse) and its relationship to *otium* somewhat in the vein of Cicero and Seneca. Sánchez de Arévalo himself would later write an epistle on *otium*, which shows his interest in the subject, even if the epistle, unlike the prologue we cited, is not concerned with Arévalo.⁷

Sánchez de Arévalo’s statement “esta desierta uilla de Arévalo” is echoed in numerous accounts of the town as a kind of isolated psychiatric ward for the mentally disturbed widowed queen of Castile, Isabella of Portugal (1428–96). It is also echoed in accounts of the “isolated” childhood in Arévalo of Alfonso and Isabella, the children of John II, King of Castile-Leon. And yet, once we identify and understand the rhetorical aspects of dedications explained above we may see a fundamental element in thinking historically about fifteenth-century Arévalo in the realities of the presence of royal personages rather than in its rhetorical tropes of “isolation.”

From the fourteenth century onwards, Arévalo was linked to the queens of Castile beginning with María de Molina, followed by Blanche of Bourbon, wife of Peter I, who went there in 1353, three days after her wedding. Beatrice of

⁶ Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, *Suma de la política*, ed. Juan Beneyto Pérez (Madrid: Instituto Francisco de Vitoria, 1944), 31ff: “como el mandamiento real nos ajuntasse en esta desierta uilla de Arévalo en comisión de arduas e grandes cosas, conuenía en ellas continuamente fablar e comunicar según su grandeza e ardudad demandaua, deliberaua e consultaua en ellas vuestra singular prudencia e tan sotil e tan discretamente, con tanta moderación e reposo e no menos esperiencia e agibilidad, que no sólo a mj, ciertamente, más a otros estudiosos uarones era vn stupor e admiración....”

⁷ For the Hispano-Jewish use of the pair *otium/negotium*, see Eleazar Gutwirth, “Jewish Writings on Art in Fifteenth-Century Castile,” *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 24 (2012): 27–32; see also, for other cultures and literatures, Emiliano Fernández Vallina, “¿Ocio frente a negocio? Petrarca y Rodrigo S. de Arévalo, primeras huellas del Petrarca vulgar,” *Revista de Poética medieval* 18 (2007): 155–77; Marina Beer, *L’ozio onorato. Saggi sulla cultura letteraria italiana del Rinascimento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1996). Jean Marie André, *L’otium dans la vie morale et intellectuelle romaine. Ses origines à l’époque augustéenne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1966); Jacques Leclercq, *Otia monastica. Études sur le vocabulaire de la contemplation au Moyen Age* (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, Herder, 1963).

Portugal (1373–1409) was queen of Castile and second wife of John I. In 1390, the death of John I meant that Beatrice of Portugal inherited Arévalo (the grant was later changed to Cuéllar). In 1420, the king of Castile, John II grants the seigneurial domain of Arévalo to his first wife Doña María de Aragón, mother of Henry IV. After the queen's death, John II married Isabella of Portugal, in 1447 in Madrigal de las Altas Torres, where his daughter Isabella was born on 22 April 1451. At that time Arévalo was granted to the queen, and Isabella spent her childhood in Arévalo. The town of Arévalo was now a royal city with the princes in residence. It would acquire a new importance and protagonism.

In Arévalo, Isabella of Portugal was tutor to her children, including the future Isabella, the Catholic Monarch, and seems to have played a political role. Queen Isabella of Portugal died in Arévalo on 15 August 1496, when the reigning monarch of Castilla and León was her daughter Isabella. Arévalo is then the setting of Isabella the Catholic's childhood up until 1464, when Henry IV, her half brother, takes her to the court.

Some of these queens had documented ties to Jews. Asher ben Yehiel and Yehuda ibn Waqr had contacts with the Castilian queen María de Molina, and Abraham ibn Shoshan was her *almoxarife*.⁸ Whatever the facts behind the *romancero*'s linking of María de Padilla or Blanche of Bourbon to a Jewish *hacíbero*, the Portuguese queens had relations with Jews in Portugal. Isabella the Catholic's Jewish entourage is well known.

To be sure, there is no lack of hyperbole in books on Isabella, and Nicasio Salvador Miguel has pointed to the exaggerations and other problems, dismissing the notion that Chacón, Martínez de Cordoba, and Fray Leonardo were involved in the education of Isabella in the Arévalo period. He shows that attention to fiscal and other economic data, such as the 1,400,000 *maravedíes* of annual royal income in Arévalo, is necessary even in discussing education and culture. Nevertheless he himself points to the convents of Arévalo as probable centers of education and culture in the town.⁹

The years that Isabella spent in Arévalo are relevant for Ibn Ṣaddiq studies. Two sources show the similar chronology. One is an archival document mentioning Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq, dated 1460. The other is the Tunis manuscript of *Zekher Saddiq*, which mentions the year 1467. Based on these two sources, we can date the years of Ibn Ṣaddiq's activities to be roughly coterminous with Isabella's presence in Arévalo. This is the period when there were teachers of

⁸ Asher ben Yehiel, *Responsa* (Zholkiev, 5563 [1803]) 17:8.

⁹ Nicasio Salvador Miguel, "La instrucción de Isabel la Católica, los años cruciales (1451–1467)," *Arbor* 178, no. 701 (2004): 107–28.

arithmetic, reading and writing, religion, music, and dance in Arévalo. This is also the period in which polyglossia was the norm at the Arévalo court.

II

The effects of the presence of royalty—at least three royal personages lived in Arévalo in the 1450s and 1460s—are not only symbolic. They have extensive practical consequences for the life of the town. The effect of such a presence, as anyone familiar with fifteenth-century evidence knows, cannot be totally documented. These effects are sometimes legal, as the town's inhabitants are marked by their contacts with royalty. They therefore leave traces in judicial proceedings, which may be apparently marginal traces of the complex organization attending upon a royal and noble presence in the town. Thus the archives have preserved a document that shows the practical effects on average Arévalo dwellers of such royal presences.¹⁰

Sometimes the evidence that has come down to us seems tangential. But it allows us to reconstruct a network of individuals and their families who serve the numerous needs of the entourages of these royal personages at Arévalo.¹¹ The presence of Muslims in the town also inscribes itself in the documents that reflect the fabric of daily relations, but these documents are not designed to answer modern preoccupations or our own questions and thus take unexpected turns. Sometimes, the Muslim component of Arévalo's population leaves traces because of something as apparently trivial as the building of a dove-cote or pigeon shed.¹² At others, there is an explicit link to royalty¹³ or to the

¹⁰ “Amparo a Francisca Meléndez, mujer que fué del bachiller Juan Sánchez, del derecho de no ser sacada, para pleitear, de la jurisdicción de la villa de Arévalo, de que es vecina, en virtud de los privilegios que poseía la reina Dña. Isabel, señora que fué de dicha villa. Inserta carta de los reyes confirmando a la Reina, su madre, la jurisdicción sobre dicha villa y otras de su señorío.” Archivo General de Simancas (hereinafter AGS), Consejo, May 6, 1476. Madrigal.

¹¹ Thus on 09 November 1480 Medina del Campo, there is a “Comisión para determinar la acusación de Francisco del Valle, repostero de cera, contra unos recueros de tierra de Arévalo que hurtaron cera que traían para la Casa Real.” AGS, Consejo, 14 February 1486. Alcalá de Henares.

¹² “Contra Mahomed Moriscate, moro de Arévalo, por la construcción de un palomar.” AGS, Leg. 148003, 440.

¹³ “Requerimiento con emplazamiento a petición de Gómez Tello guarda real, contra Mahomed Moriscate, moro, vecino de Arévalo, sobre la construcción de un palomar que éste se comprometió a hacer. Consejo.” Other witnesses to the Muslim presence are

more precise background.¹⁴ More clear is the economic evidence in Arévalo; in 1463 and 1464 Muslims paid 7,000 *maravedíes* in taxes, and in 1501, the amount levied was 10,000 *maravedíes*. In 1495, the number of Mudejar families is estimated at around 107; in 1496, 116; and in 1500, 137.¹⁵ These facts about a strong and visible Muslim presence might help to explain Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq's attitudes.

Occasionally the city appears in the context of historic events such as the war with Portugal as in a document of March 1486 (a year before the last date in the *Zekher Saddiq*).¹⁶ Momentous events in the kingdom manifest themselves in much lesser but more concrete, individual fashion, in relation to the Jews of Arévalo, as in a document from Toledo from March 20, 1480.¹⁷

This last document brings us to the theme of the presence of a Jewish community at Arévalo. We learn about it from first hand documents but not from studies on Yosef de Arévalo, which are usually silent on the subject. It was neither a new¹⁸ community nor was it insignificant. The *Partición de las aljamas* carried out in Huete in September 1290 records the contribution of the community of Arévalo as 12,377 *maravedíes*.¹⁹ An eighteenth-century copy of a medieval document²⁰ records a letter of payment given to the dean and chapter of

documents such as a "Remisión de proceso de Gibil Copete con Yuçuf, moro albeitar de Arévalo," AGS, Leg. 1484II, 23.

¹⁴ "Carta compulsoria para que presenten un proceso a petición de Gibil (?) Copete, en el pleito que tuvo contra Yuçuf, albeitar moro, vecino de Arévalo, por ciertos bienes." AGS, Consejo, 22 November 1484. Valladolid.

¹⁵ Serafín de Tapia Sánchez, "Los mudéjares de la Extremadura castellano-leonesa. Notas sobre una minoría dócil (1085–1502)," *Studia historica. Historia medieval* 7 (1989): 95–126. See his n. 30: "Con el paso del tiempo quienes vivían en el arrabal de Arévalo—judíos, moros, campesinos ricos—aumentaron en riqueza, exigiendo en el año 1480 integrarse a la villa; a esta pretensión se oponían los vecinos de la tierra." See also his assertion: "en La Moraña vivía uno de los grupos mudéjares más importantes de Castilla. Según las socriddas listas fiscales de 1463, la aljama de Arévalo (y comarca) aportó 7.000 maravedíes;" 130.

¹⁶ On that date a document was drawn up concerning an inhabitant of Arévalo: "Perdón a favor de Diego Muñoz, hijo de Luis Sánchez Muñoz, vecino de Arévalo, en virtud de lo capitulado con el Rey de Portugal," Reyes, 28 March 1480, Toledo.

¹⁷ "Emplazamiento a petición del comendador Pedro de Valdenebro, criado del Prior de San Juan, contra Vasco de Jerez, criado de la duquesa de Arévalo, que le tiene usurpados ciertos derechos sobre la aljama de los judíos de Arévalo." Consejo, Real Cancillería de los Reyes.

¹⁸ Nevertheless, the belief in the existence of a local tombstone of a Jew-father of Samuel ben Shealtiel ha-Nasi, who died on the 16th of Elul (27 August 1097) is probably groundless. Moses de Leon's birthplace is less than relevant here.

¹⁹ Fritz Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien* (Berlin: Akademie, Verlag, 1929–36), ii, 81.

²⁰ Baer, *Die Juden*, 106.

the town by Çag de Gazia, “vecino de Arévalo” and “arrendador de las alcavalas de las heredades de Arévalo” on September 26, 1336. The Jews are believed to have lived in the areas of Arrabal, El Salvador, and San Juan de Dios, towards the Adaja. In the Church of San Martín and other locations in the town, on July 28, 1454, the death of John II, the breaking of his heraldic shields, and the coronation of Enrique IV were marked by ceremonies in which the Jews of Arévalo participated “haciendo todos muchos momos.”²¹

The precise relationship to Arévalo of individuals whose names suggest an origin there, is not always clear, as in the case of the rabbi of Ávila, David de Arévalo. He seems to have had little impact on Jewish thought and Hebrew texts but is mentioned more than once in the documents, as in one from the Registro del Sello de Corte signed on 02 December 1478, at Cordoba.²² A probable explanation for his repeated presence in the documents is that a Jew from Arévalo would have been in demand as a rabbi in Ávila. Other Jews originating in Arévalo but living elsewhere are documented. Also relevant, therefore, might be the so-called “Ketuba” of Torrelobatón. Drawn up for the marriage of Arévalo Jews—Moshe Amigo, son of Shmuel Amigo, and Bienvenida, the daughter of Yehuda Galfon “the Wealthy”—in Torrelobatón on 18 March 1480, the document states that the bride brought a dowry of clothing, jewellery, and furnishings valued at 50,000 *maravedíes*. The contract is kept at the Archivo de la Chancillería, Valladolid, Pergaminos 22/13/11; it measures 410x320 mm.²³ In addition to the fact that parchment was used and the artistic geometric ornamentation in red and sepia, the father’s nickname, if correct, testifies to the wealth of the families. The Hebrew calligraphy is perhaps more cursive than the square hand of the parallels from Navarre (Tudela, Milagro) in the early fourteenth century, and the geometric ornamentation by means of circles is more imaginative (and reminiscent of such Hebrew manuscript ornamentations as those of the Sevillian Hebrew Bible at the Hispanic Society), but this is hardly evidence for “isolation,” for a “rural” taste or aesthetic. These Jews from Arévalo converted and later documents show that Amigo was involved in pharmaceuticals and by 1515 had adopted the name Nuño de la Torre, while

²¹ Cándido María Ajo González de Rapariegos, *Historia de Ávila y de toda su tierra*, 12 vols. (Ávila, Madrid: Institución Alonso de Madrigal, CSIC, 1962–94), 12:315.

²² “Incitativa a las justicias de Ávila, sobre que rabí David de Arévalo sea pagado de las costas de un pleito que contra él movió el judío Zazo Ara. Consejo.” AGS, 02 December 1478. Cordoba.

²³ María de la Soterraña Martín Postigo, *Historia del Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid* (Valladolid: [Martín Postigo], 1979). José Luis Lacave, *Medieval Ketubot from Sefarad* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2002), 29, 72, 75.

Bienvenida became Mencía Velázquez. Pharmacology, as has recently been shown, was one of the mainstream areas of medieval Hispano-Jewish culture.²⁴

The documents signed at Arévalo—some of them of recognized importance, such as the ratification of the Treaty of Tordesillas on 02 July 1494—as well as the meetings that took place there (of the Cortes or others), such as the one mentioned above concerning Sánchez de Arévalo, are ample proof of the lack of a real basis for the argument that the town was “isolated,” “deserted,” or for the image of it as a backwater in the fifteenth century.

III

Against this broad canvas that goes from María de Molina to Germaine of Foix, the decade of the Zúñiga's possession of the town seems hardly significant. And yet, the 1470s are the period in which ibn Ṣaddiq's chronicle or chapter fifty of the *Zekher Saddiq* was being written. On 20 December 1469, the Ducado de Arévalo and the Condado de Banares were granted by Enrique IV to Álvaro de Zúñiga y Guzmán, 2nd Count of Plasencia, 3rd Lord of Béjar and 4th Lord of Gibraleón, who thus became 1st Duke of Plasencia and 1st Duke of Béjar. The relations between the town of Arévalo and the Zúñigas have been the subject of a study by Gloria Lora Serrano.²⁵ She emphasizes the destruction of buildings, the uprisings, and the discontent with the new situation. One may also look at the opposite side of the change. The salaries of those in the pay of the Zúñigas, the master craftsmen brought to town for the works on the fortress (and palace), and the very presence of the family would have meant an injection of vitality into the town. This is the period of gestation of—and the background to—part of the work [the fiftieth chapter] of Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq de Arévalo or—as the fifteenth-century documents would have it—Çaf de Arévalo. But Arévalo was not the only possession of the Zuñigas and their attitudes may be reconstructed on the basis of their history in other places as well. After the Zúñiga family took possession of the manor of Béjar and the city of Plasencia in January 1442, members of the Jewish community became collectors of taxes and rents.

²⁴ Eleazar Gutwirth, “Ethical and Poetical Pharmacologies from Medieval Spain,” *Revue des Etudes Juives* 170, nos. 3–4 (2011): 477–502.

²⁵ Gloria Lora Serrano, “El ducado de Arévalo (1469–1480). Un conflicto señorial en tierras abulenses a fines de la Edad Media,” *Historia. Instituciones: Documentos* 25 (1998): 369–94.

The Zúñigas, as a family, had ties to Jewish figures such as Abraham Zacut²⁶ or members of the Abravanel family, e.g. Yuce Abrabanel in Plasencia.²⁷ As Martín Sánchez asserts about the Zúñigas' town of Plasencia,

Poco sabemos de la ocupación económica y de la condición social de esas mil familias placentinas, salvo que algo más de la décima parte, “ciento y pico de familias”, estaba formada por musulmanes y judíos, que, sobre todo en el caso de los primeros, “constituían la masa de oficiales menestrales y braceros de la población”, y destacaban, aparte de por su trabajo artesanal, por la explotación exhaustiva y ejemplar que realizaban de la huerta del Jerte.²⁸

The Abravanel family was linked to the Zúñigas apparently since the fourteenth century, when the houses of the Abravanel in Seville were taken over by the Zúñigas.²⁹ In 1477 the Zúñigas ordered the Plasencia Synagogue to be closed and destroyed in order to expand the adjacent palace and the convent. Their interest in Islam is shown by the manuscripts in their library. The inventory (now lost) of the library of the Duchess of Arévalo, Doña Leonor de Pimentel, compiled in 1468, mentions two manuscript codices where Iça appears as author: one is a “Libro de coberturas de cuero morado de don yça guidili alfaqui de los moros de Segovia, que hiso contra la fe, al qual responde frey Juan Lopes;” the second is a “Libro de coberturas moradas escripto de mano ques el que hiso don caguidili mofti de los moros de Segovia.” The first is a religious polemic with the Dominican theologian Juan López de Salamanca.³⁰ In fine, a reconstruction of the background shows that the period in which Yosef de Arévalo flourished is characterized by the importance of the town and the existence of contact between the Crown, the nobility, and the Jews as well as Muslims.

²⁶ Eleazar Gutwirth, “The Historian’s Origins and Genealogies: The Sefer Yuhasin,” *Hispania Judaica Bulletin* 6 (2008): 57–83.

²⁷ Elisa Carolina de Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra. Proyección de un pasado y reflejo de una época* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural El Brocense, 1981), 140.

²⁸ José Martín Martín and José Miguel Sánchez Estévez, “Plasencia y su tierra en el siglo XV,” *Norba. Revista de arte, geografía e historia* 2 (1981): 193–204.

²⁹ Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho, “El judío sevillano don Yuçaf Pichón contador mayor de Enrique II de Castilla (1369–1379),” in *Judaísmo hispano. Estudios en memoria de José Luis Lacave Riaño*, ed. Elena Romero, 2 vols. (Madrid: CSIC, 2002), 2:561–74.

³⁰ Gerard A. Wiegers, “Breviario Çunní, de Iça de Gebir,” in *Memoria de los Moriscos. Escritos y relatos de una diáspora cultural*, coord. Alfredo Mateos Paramio (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2010), 130–32.

IV

Understanding the work of Yosef ibn Şaddiq de Arévalo from our perspective necessarily requires some critical rereading of the scholarship on him. This is the case because of the distortion introduced unwittingly by nineteenth century scholarship which in our case means the learned librarian at the Bodleian and correspondent of Steinschneider, Adolf Neubauer.³¹ In 1887, Neubauer edited the text of a fragment—rather than the whole ms—[ms 2367 of his *Catalogue*] of Yosef ibn Şaddiq's work, the fiftieth chapter of the *Zekher Saddiq*, which consisted of a chronicle.³²

Within less than a decade, Adler, the famous scholar, was using it to establish chronology, as in the case of al-Bargeloni.³³ In the ensuing century, the corpus of references to Yosef of Arévalo was dominated by similar uses of this fragment—only one chapter out of fifty. It was facile to concentrate on the work's “deficiencies:” Romulus is made a contemporary of David, with whom he allegedly signed a peace treaty. Similar criticism can be made of the nineteenth-century definition of the work as “a ritual,” a category so broad that it could encompass almost anything. The Jewish prayerbook contains texts from the Bible, Mishnah, Gemara, Geonic literature and from the Middle Ages. Yosef of Arévalo also includes in his work a rich collection of poems, as in the seven *baqqashot* including a *lahan* (tune marker) on fols. 10–13 of London, British Library, ms Add. 197 85. The table of contents in this manuscript leaves little doubt as to the juridical/religious (i.e. halakic) content and purpose of the work. To take an example, the subject of chapter 49 is there described not as prayer but as *trefot* (i.e., food unfit for consumption). The practice of decontextualization and fragmentation, that is, of choosing one aspect of the text as key, unintentionally distorts our view of the work carried out in Arévalo. Perceptions of it as a work of vocalization or of Passover³⁴ or of laws of the

³¹ “Yosef ben Şaddiq of Arévalo, *Zekher Saddiq*,” in Adolf Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887–95), 1:85–100.

³² Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish*, 1:2.

³³ Elkan Nathan Adler, “An Eleventh-Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: Being a Fragment from the Sepher ha-Ittim of Rabbi Judah ben Barzilai of Barcelona,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 9 (1897): 669–716.

³⁴ Yosef ibn Şaddiq, *Zekher Saddiq: Seder ḥag ha-Pesaḥ: ha-Hagadah u-ferushah, hilkhot ha-ḥag u-minhagay, tefilot u-sfyutim* [Zekher Şaddiq; The Haggada Section], ed. Abraham Shoshana and Yaakov Shemu'el Spiegel (Jerusalem: Mekhon Ofek, 1994).

blowing of the ram's horn on the New Year or of phylacteries³⁵ could have similarly unintended effects.

V

Once we realize the legal/halakic character of much of the content, we are in a better position to analyze it. Indeed, the attempts to see it merely in terms of a dichotomy between Sephardi (Iberian) and Ashkenazi (Franco-German) Jewry may reflect certain twentieth-century preoccupations. It could be argued, in contrast, that the history of halakic writing and its tendencies could provide a more relevant approach to the text. Such tendencies may be reconstructed in two ways: one attends to the critical while the other attends to the constructive. The first method pays attention to a corpus of late medieval Hispano-Jewish critiques of legal practice and education. These late medieval critiques concentrate, it has been argued, on the excessively academic, theoretical, and polemic nature of Torah study practices. It is as if there were two Torahs. The rabbis and the learned are not interested in the practical or—as they phrased it—"what Israel should do."³⁶ It has been argued that this has a historical context, discernible in coeval critiques of Christian jurists and lawyers who "multiply opinions." The existence of such a trend of negative attitudes can be proven from Christian legal writings going (at least) as far back as the Prologue to the *Partidas* and—crucially—continuing unabated throughout the late Spanish Middle Ages. These texts show that the problem was neither a theoretical abstraction operating in a historical vacuum nor was it restricted to the confines of the *juderías*.³⁷

The more constructive aspect is that of the trend towards creating practical, useful codification, digests, and shorter works focusing on smaller, well-defined areas of religious/halakic practice. The best known example of this trend, of course, is the basis of modern Jewish codes, i.e. the work of Jacob

³⁵ Ya'akov S. Spiegel "Hilkhot Tephilin mi-sefer Zecher Şaddiq le-R. Yosef ben Şaddiq" [Laws of Tefilim], in *Pithe Tefilah w-Moed* (Jerusalem, 2010), 9–23; Spiegel, "Dine sukka tfilot ha-hag we-halel mi-sefer Zekher Şaddiq le- r. Yosef b. r. Şaddiq" [Laws of Sukka], *Moriah* 30 (2010): 3–19.

³⁶ Eleazar Gutwirth "Social Criticism in Alami's Epistle," in "Social Tensions in Fifteenth Century Hispano-Jewish Communities" (PhD Diss., University of London, 1978), chap. 1.

³⁷ Eleazar Gutwirth, "Conversions to Christianity amongst Fifteenth-Century Spanish Jews: An Alternative Explanation," in *Shlomo Simonsohn Jubilee Volume: Studies on the History of the Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance Period*, ed. Daniel Carpi (Tel Aviv: University, Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, 1993), 97–121.

ben Asher of Toledo (d. 1349?) known as the *Four Columns* or *Four Rows* (of the High Priest's breastplate). Its fame and prestige may have obscured, until recently, the fact that it is an individual instance of a widespread Hispano-Jewish phenomenon. One need only look at the recent work of Judah Galinsky, for example, to realize how many more exponents of such a trend there were in late medieval Spain.³⁸ Shem Tov de Carrión de los Condes is only one of such exponents in his Hebrew translation of a Judeo-Arabic work on the religious laws of certain liturgical seasons: the *Miṣvot Zemanyyot*.³⁹ I have argued elsewhere that there are links between liturgy and historiography, and these are somewhat obscured by the study of Yosef of Arévalo's chronicle out of its liturgical context. We will no doubt be in a better position to judge this when the whole is edited.

If we accept this recontextualization of the *Zekher* as part of a late medieval Hispano-Jewish trend towards concentrating on "what Israel should do" i.e. on practical halakah, we may attend to a feature of the Muslim Mancebo de Arévalo's project. The so called Mancebo is the famous author of an *aljamiado* doctrinal work, *Tafsīra*. The Moriscos, at the time of his travel and writing, fear that the texts necessary for a Muslim religious life will be lost. They consider him educated enough to recover these religious texts, and he undertakes his travels to collect the traditions whether from clandestine libraries containing manuscripts in aljamia or in Arabic or orally from the elders, whether in Zaragoza, Granada, Toledo, etc.⁴⁰ So that, again, the collection of practical religious knowledge is the objective. The similarities between the projects undertaken by Yosef of Arévalo and the Mancebo seem evident even though the circumstances differ.

VI

A closer framing would begin with family and locale. Yosef of Arévalo's genealogy is known through his own memorializing:

³⁸ Judah D. Galinsky, "On Popular Halakhic Literature and the Jewish Reading Audience in Fourteenth-Century Spain," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, no. 3 (2008): 305–27.

³⁹ Eleazar Gutwirth, "Oro de Ofir. El árabe y Don Shem Tov de Carrión," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 77, no. 4 (2000): 275–86.

⁴⁰ Mercedes García-Arenal, "Ríos y caminos moriscos. El Islam tardío español," *Revista de libros* 134 (2008): 10–15.

Qiṣṣur Zekher Saddiq by Yosef son of his honour the elevated prince [*nasi*] the pillar of the diaspora R. Ṣaddiq son of the prince [*naggid*] the elder R. Yosef son of the honourable great prince [*sar*] the fortress and the tower R. Ṣaddiq may the memory of the just and the saintly be blessed.

The passage, however brief and apparently conventional, is worth considering because of the paucity of biographical data, and because it is a clue to Yosef of Arévalo's self-fashioning. It raises much broader methodological problems. Yosef refers to his ancestors in extremely elevated terms: *nasi*, *gaon*, etc. However, it appears that no one else refers to them nor has any work by them been found. This leads us to wonder whether there is in the Middle Ages an "inflation of titles" and therefore if the employment of such terms as *Nasi* or *naggid* or *amud ha-gola* for the family of the author from Arévalo is nothing more than familial piety or pure hyperbole. On the other hand it also raises the question as to whether the present institutional concern with authorship causes a distortion when it is anachronistically projected unto the Middle Ages as the sole standard of evaluation. Indeed it is possible to imagine other standards—e.g. non-authorial spiritual leadership, philanthropy, etc.—that might have lent some substance to the image of belonging to an illustrious dynasty in Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq's self-fashioning.

In any case, the paragraph was obviously unknown to Fidel Fita and his followers,⁴¹ who depend mostly on archival documentation. This has some repercussions for the identification or links of our author with the individuals mentioned in the Segovian *Libros de mayordomías*. These documents attest to the presence in Segovia of individuals who, like our Rabbi, are named "de Arévalo" in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, but the way of referring to them differs from the genealogy we mentioned above. Thus, in 1389 we find a "Don Yacó de Arévalo" and in September 1392 "en la calle de Escuderos, á Don Mosé tejedor, Don Yacó de Arévalo, Don Yudá Abenhoria" and in 1400: "en la de Escuderos Don Mosé [tejedor], Don Mosé Çaratgoçí, Yucé de Arévalo, Yacó de Arévalo y Simuel Vielaviet." The *mayordomo* Diego López del Castillo was responsible for the *Libro de mayordomía* of 1460. Among the rent payers of the "casas de Lope carretero," we find the mention of [7.^a] "Çaf de Arévalo." There are no mentions of "Ṣaddiq" in the *Libros de mayordomía*, and there is no mention of Jacob de Arévalo in the genealogy of the author of the *Zekher Saddiq*.

⁴¹ Fidel Fita, "La judería de Segovia. Documentos inéditos," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 9 (1886): 270–93.

VII

Some lines in Yosef de Arevalo's chronicle have been chosen over the years as representative of its inaccuracies and character, such as those that mention Romulus or Isidore. However, other passages shed light on the question of Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq's attitudes toward Christianity and Islam. Recently a passage on astronomy has been seen as significant in this frame.⁴² It shows that rather than an iconoclastic Judaism with its second commandment against graven images, we find something else, namely that Yosef, the Rabbi so concerned with halakah or religious law, does not express animosity towards Christian works of art or Muslim science. He writes,

... in the fourth year of his reign he [Alfonso x] ordered the Jewish sage Gudsal ben Moshe al-Kohen of Toledo to translate from the Arabic to the vernacular the honourable book composed by the sage Albuhatani Abd-Alrahman ben Umar Asufi which deals with matters of the stars and the zodiac and their figures according to the drawings of the heavens. The tables composed by this king about astronomy also were copied. *And my eyes have seen this honourable book and it was written in pure gold and I say that whoever has not seen this book has not seen a magnificent beautiful thing.*

What is interesting here is the act of writing down statements about art. “Their figures according to the drawings of the heavens” is not a reference to calligraphy. We have been aware for over a century of the existence of Hebrew manuscript illuminations, but what needs to be emphasized is that writing about art is an activity in its own right that deserves attention not only as an ancestor of art criticism and not only for what it says about iconoclasm.

The paragraph—taken over later by Abraham b. Shlomo for his chronicle without mentioning the name of Yosef—is not out of character. Despite the numerous generalizations about medieval Jewish historiography, a specific text, such as this chronicle/chapter, does not support the theory of lack of interest in non-Jewish, gentile history. The chronicle contains references to numerous gentile historical figures. Ibn Ṣaddiq does not limit himself to one gentile or one Christian personality such as a king or queen. Some of the pagans seem a “natural” choice because they would be familiar to fifteenth century Hispano-Jewish readers from Talmud and Midrash, but others are not. Thus,

⁴² Eleazar Gutwirth, “Jewish Writings on Art in Fifteenth-Century Castile,” *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 24 (2012): 27–32.

in the chronicle we encounter Julius ("the great king whose mother died while he was inside"); Hadrian; "Romilos"; Ptolemy; Antoninos ("son of Severus"); Galen; Mohamed; Don Fernando (1st Count of Castile-Leon); "sidi rudiaz" (i.e., Mio Cid, Ruy Díaz); Alfonso VI; King "Galimis de Aragón" or Pedro II; Fernando III, King of Castilla-León, and others; so that selecting any one of these would require some argument.

The need to situate this chapter/chronicle in the context of the thought and attitudes current in fifteenth-century Hispano-Jewish communities is apparent elsewhere in Yosef's text as well. For example, towards the end of the chronicle we encounter the following paragraph:

... Ronda, Marbella, Cartajima, Q-s-a-r-h [Cascares?] all these cities throughout the region of ha-sharqia [or Axarquía] in the kingdom of Mulai Abu'l Hassan King of Granada, our lord the king don Fernando took in the year 1485. In 5246 which is 1485, on 18 Heshvan [October 18] there was a rain in the land for sixty days and sixty nights. Truly from the flood until now there is no memory amongst those of this generation of hearing or seeing a great wonder like this. In 1487 there was no rain for nine months by divine providence the price of wheat was ninety gold *maravedíes* and barley forty-five. In 1487 our lord the king took tragh [Torrox?] and Vélez Málaga and besieged the city of Málaga the praised city on the coast of the western sea on Sabbath 29th Av,... and he besieged it four months and captured all the people of the city almost twelve thousand Muslims and among them almost four hundred Jews and the Jewish communities ransomed them at great expense ...⁴³

The first impression is that of a jumble of personal names, dates, toponyms and facts whose relation to each other is not always clear. There is a selection whose principles need to be revealed. Thus, for example, this paragraph

43 See the translation in Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 281, where Cartajima is identified rather than Cartagena. It may be added that Cartajima (10 km from Ronda) was big enough to be granted in 1510 a separate parish, along with Tolox. This was after the creation of the new diocese of Málaga by the bishop of Seville in 1505. Alejandro VI confirms the new borders of the archdiocese of Granada in April 1493, whereby the *sierras* around Ronda came under the jurisdiction of the Málaga bishopric. See Alejandro Pérez Ordóñez "Viejas mezquitas, nuevas iglesias. Materializaciones formales de la implantación del cristianismo en la Sierra de Cádiz tras la conquista castellana (1485–1500)," in *Abadía. Homenaje a Don José Rodríguez Molina. VJornadas de Historia en la Abadía de Alcalá la Real* (Jaén: Diputación Provincial, 2005), 633–42.

reveals a closer interest in wars than do sections dealing with wars in other ages. Then again, the wars with the kingdom of Granada lasted a number of years, and many towns which were conquered or besieged are not mentioned by Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq.

We can frame it, first, in the tendency in contemporary Hebrew texts to write about war and history concentrating on certain selected towns. Attention has been paid to the selection of Santa Fe in a brief Hebrew chronicle of those years.⁴⁴ A third case—in addition to Yosef and the brief Hebrew chronicle—would be that of Isaac Caro. He was at the Yeshiva of Toledo before emigrating to Portugal. His homilies were collected in his *Toldot Ishaq*, in which he focuses on the fall of Málaga rather than other towns and explains it by referring to the politics of the time. He uses this history to clarify the Scriptures.⁴⁵ In the *Shevet Yehudah*, printed in 1552–54 (?), the Málaga of the 1480–90s makes a special appearance as it is accompanied by an unusual “thus said Shlomo ibn Verga.” All these Hebrew authors think it legitimate to write in Hebrew about narrow, selected aspects of the history of the war with Granada centered on specific, chosen towns. Shlomo’s documented presence in Ronda is linked to the efforts to ransom the Jews of Málaga, which we know were coordinated by Abraham Senneor and Meir Melamed. Ronda and the ransom are therefore linked and we begin to discern that what we have in the text of Yosef’s chronicle is not a meaningless jumble of toponyms. In addition, the conquest of Ronda was tactically part of that of Málaga.⁴⁶ Cartajima was tied to Ronda not only by its proximity (ten km) but also through the ecclesiastic geography, which was officially recognized by Pope Alexander VI in 1496.

A similarly revealing example of the chronicle’s tendency is the case of its selection, out of numerous possibilities, of the topics of war, flood, scarcity or abundance (of wheat) and presenting them in contiguity. To understand the particular congruence of what to the modern innocent reader are incongruous aspects of the history of the 1480s one may try to link them. The first step is to remember the particular pride Yosef exhibits in his composition of almanacs/calendars as expressed at length in the poem/colophon to a section of the *Zekher* he wrote in the 1460s. The almanacs at this time imply a certain

44 Eleazar Gutwirth, “Historians in Context: Jewish Historiography in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 30 (2003): 147–68.

45 Eleazar Gutwirth, “Isaac Caro in his Time,” *Misclánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 40, no. 2 (1991): 119–30; Gutwirth, “La España de Isaac Caro,” in *Actas del IV Congreso Internacional Encuentro de las Tres Culturas*, ed. Carlos Carrete Parrondo (Toledo: Ayuntamiento, 1988): 51–56.

46 Juan José Moreti, *Historia de L.M.N. y M.L. Ciudad de Ronda* (Ronda: J.J. Moreti, 1867).

interest in the science of the stars. We can get an idea of how this branch of natural philosophy was understood in Spain in the second half of the fifteenth century from works such as *Eclipse de sol* (Salamanca, 1485) by the Licenciado Diego de Torres. This is an incunable whose subject is eclipses, which are used to create horoscopes and make predictions about events that concern not only individuals but also the kingdom. Famine, epidemics, natural catastrophes/floods and wars come under its purview.⁴⁷ His 1485 work, *Opus astrologicum*, recently studied by Susana Burgueño Arjona, offers more detail.⁴⁸ Here the objective is to learn how to interpret/judge the movement of the stars, particularly the eclipses and great conjunctions. Thus, if conjunction occurs in a water sign, there will be great floods.⁴⁹ To interpret the great conjunctions, the reader is told to identify the lord of the year, of the people, of the illnesses or epidemics, of the abundance and the scarcities. Diego de Torre is also known as a collaborator or contemporary of Zacut. In some of Zacut's works, including those composed for Zúñiga, we find these same subjects of judicial astronomy: epidemics, floods, wars. The themes reappear in another type of work. Indeed, a number of collections [e.g., Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Ferrara; Biblioteca Colombina, Seville] of rare, early printed books have preserved several prints entitled *Pronóstico de lo excelentíssimo astrógrapho Zacuth*. The dates differ: 1516, 1519, 1529, 1538, etc. The place is mostly given as Ferrara. Their concerns are similar to those mentioned above.

The personal names and toponyms in editions of his chronicle, the fiftieth chapter, have obviously been distorted. This cannot be seen as proof of fifteenth-century forgetfulness of earlier medieval personalities such as, for example, the astronomers. Again, the question of the manuscripts comes to the fore. Despite the number of copies, facsimiles, translations, there has been little progress on the ecdotic front. Apparently, no new manuscripts have been discovered. This means that we still depend on the manuscripts of uncertain provenance published in the nineteenth century (without a thorough description) by Harkavy. That is to say by someone who, like a number

47 Marcelino V. Amasuno, *Un texto médico astrológico del siglo XV, 'Eclipse de Sol' del licenciado Diego de Torres* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1972). Salaya, De Torres, and Basurto are believed to be linked to Zacut. So is Ciruelo: see Jorge Manuel Ayala Martínez, "El maestro darocense Pedro Sánchez Ciruelo," *Aragón en la Edad Media* 10–11 (1993): 85–100.

48 Susana Burgueño Arjona, "Astronomía, filosofía y humanismo científico en Diego de Torres (1482–1496)," *Duererías. Analecta Philosophiae: Revista de Filosofía* 1 (2009): 1–11. Susana Burgueño Arjona, *El saber astrológico a finales del siglo XV en la Universidad de Salamanca* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2009).

49 Burgueño Arjona, *El saber astrológico*, 272.

of his contemporaries [Antonin, Wertheimer,⁵⁰ Shapiro, etc.] was renowned for evading the question of precise provenance. And it is a very basic observation that we cannot evaluate or judge orthography on the basis of manuscripts about whose scribes we know little or nothing and who in all probability came from different regions and used different vernaculars than those of Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq.

That Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq of Arévalo predated Abraham Zacut and Abraham ben Shlomo is clear although not sufficiently recognized. The theory that they all draw on a lost chronicle rather than on Yosef, has not yet been substantiated by the discovery of that lost chronicle. Both Yosef and Abraham b. Shlomo share a determination to memorialize the astronomical tables, the Christian king, and the translation project within their abilities or knowledge.

The passage quoted above about the ornamented book of astronomy is by no means the only section where Yosef rescues from oblivion elements of non-Jewish history. Numerous additional examples of interest in figures from pagan, Muslim, and Christian history such as those mentioned above can be found. He leaves a model for his followers legitimizing Jewish interest in gentile history.

VIII

There is still much more we can learn by rereading the extensive table of contents and colophon of *Zekher Saddiq*. Similarly, the *Libros de mayordomía* mentioned above that were uncovered by Fita provide more than a mere address in Segovia. They suggest a family rooted in Segovia, in the “Calle de Escuderos,” throughout the fifteenth century, rather than a passing stay in a single year. If we pay attention to Yosef’s own view of his lengthy treatise of fifty chapters, we get the impression that his emphases are not necessarily those of our own day.

Yosef is—as would be expected—someone interested in the law of his own religion; he believes in a fundamental difference between what he calls the seventy nations and the people of Israel. He also believes that the God to whom the Jews pray will save them. These ideas are hardly surprising or intentionally polemical, but against such a general background, other attitudes become noticeable by contrast.

⁵⁰ On Wertheimer see for example Eleazar Gutwirth, “Coplas de Yocef from the Genizah,” *Revue des Études Juives* 155, no. 3–4 (1996): 387–400. On the question of Shapira and its significance see Gutwirth, “Identifying Scholarship,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92.3–4 (2002): 145–54.

A reading of the verses in the book is revealing. Particularly interesting is his evident pride in issues related to the calendar and the emphasis on his knowledge and his mastery of the calendars of different religions or cultures. This is clear also from the inclusion of the technical terms for the Muslim and Christian calendars into the Hebrew text of his poem about the book. Whatever we may or have read into the *Zekher Saddiq*, the author himself saw the question of astronomy and calendars as a primordial aspect of his labors. His interest in religious festivals is clear even from the published fragments on the ram's horn in Rosh Ha-shana (New Year) or on Passover or Tabernacles. It is amplified in the verses or poem/colophon in praise of his book.

It is therefore difficult to avoid the question of the Mancebo de Arévalo. This is not because of a possible influence by the Mancebo on Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq. On the contrary. In the introduction to the work written in aljamia morisca entitled *Breve Compendio de la Santa Ley*, we find a mention of the Mancebo. Writing in 1533, Baray, the author, tells us that he began this work eight years after the conversion of the Muslims (i.e., 1525). He was aided by an “eskolano de buena doctrina” who “era natural de Arévalo” and said that his mother had been a Christian for 25 years. So that someone—a Muslim from Arévalo—who was a young “eskolano” in 1533 could hardly have been the model for a lengthy work finished in 1487, more than forty years earlier, and indeed the bulk of it had been finished by 1467, more than sixty years earlier. The Mancebo introduces into the *Compendio* personal reminiscences of conversations with Judeo-conversos or crypto-Jews including a converso host in Toledo. The rubric at the beginning says that he was “muy experto y adoctrinado” in the “lektura ebrayka.” Even if this rubric is late, his mention of Jews and Hebrew are unusually intense for this type of Muslim writing. It may be true that, as Gerard A. Wiegers remarks,⁵¹ the Mancebo’s own writings do not corroborate such knowledge and therefore he “knew no Hebrew;” nevertheless even the claim that he knew Hebrew could be interesting. It was by no means common in that period.

More recently there has been an edition and study of the Mancebo’s Islamic calendar,⁵² in which he surveys the lunar calendar, indicates days of special piety, recommends ritual ceremonies, and reminds readers of their special historical and religious commemorations. For example, the twelfth moon is called *du alhyyyati* and it is not obligatory because it is “de la regla de ibrahim,” and he adds, “eran de precepto para los judíos [el deceno es pascua de carneros];” or,

⁵¹ Gerard A. Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado: Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), His Antecedents and Successors* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

⁵² Luis Fernando Bernabé Pons, “El calendario musulmán del Mancebo de Arévalo,” *Sharq Al-Andalus. Estudios mudéjares y moriscos* 16–17 (1999–2002): 241–64.

elsewhere, “the Jews who are called by the Christians *irraelitas*.” The author speaks about the *dio* not *dios* of the Jews.⁵³

IX

Yosef, in the non-historical bulk of the work is influenced by the Tur and by Abudarham but cites numerous other sources, some of them apparently unknown today, such as the novella of Jonah Gerundi on *Tractate Rosh Ha-shana*. He cites Tosafot frequently, in contrast with the school of Campanton. He cites the *Zohar* and *Sha'are orah* of Gikatilla, so that not only in the chronicle do we encounter a certain breadth of reading and a cosmopolitan attitude to sources.

The Mancebo's broad horizons are by now well known thanks to the discovery of sources such as the *Celestina*⁵⁴ or a Kempis.⁵⁵ These are not only issues of *Quellenforschung*. They inspire wonder because they are so unusual in the culture and because of their broad implications: the Mancebo's affinity with a Petrarchan sensibility and with the inner spirituality of the *Imitatio Christi*. This breadth does not imply a lack of concern for the local. We know that the Mancebo returned to Arévalo to visit his mother. Is there a basis for this sense of the local, of the importance of landscape in the case of Yosef de Arévalo?

Since most of what we know comes from his text, we need some minimal awareness of how to read it. Let us take for example his assertion that a purpose of the book is to memorialize all the “sages of Ashkenaz, Sefarad, and *Qiryat ye'arim*.” The designation of Iberia as Sefarad and the Franco-German areas as Ashkenaz is so common as to be banal, but Yosef's “the city of forests” or *qiryat ye'arim* needs a brief note. Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq is assuming that his public remembers the biblical verses in Joshua 14: [“From the hill facing Beth Horon on the south the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at] *Kiriath Baal* [*that is, Kiriath Ye'arim*], a town of the sons of Judah.” His public would remember also other verses such as Josh. 15:63: “[Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there] [*in Jerusalem*] with the sons of Judah.” And, finally, Obad. 1:20 “the exiles

53 Luis F. Bernabé Pons, “Un ‘nuevo’ texto del Mancebo de Arévalo,” *Sharq Al-Andalus. Estudios mudéjares y moriscos* 14–15 (1997–98): 469–70.

54 María Teresa Narváez, “El Mancebo de Arévalo, lector morisco de *La Celestina*,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 72, no. 3 (1995): 255–72.

55 Gregorio Fonseca Antuña, *Sumario de la relación y ejercicio espiritual sacado y declarado por el mancebo de Arévalo en nuestra lengua castellana* (Madrid: Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, 2002).

from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev....” The periphrastic identification of Spain and Kiriat Ye’arim is established by these allusions to at least three verses from different books of the bible. This allusive texture is by no means an individual particularity. Quite to the contrary—it is so widespread that it is usually taken for granted and ignored. I point to this simple phrase (which makes no sense unless we assume memories of different verses of the Bible) because it shows that modern translation and reading strategies that expect transparency and instant recognition do not work in the approach to Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq. What he seeks is not instant gratification but sonority. That is why the colophon’s assertion as to place needs to be reread.

It was written in Arévalo which dwells [or sits] on two rivers in the year seven and twenty and two hundred according to the Christians and its symbol [or sign or mnemonic] is Zekher Saddiq [i.e. the title of the book.]

There are, then, two components in the colophon: the place and the date. The dating of a Jewish/Hebrew book according to the Christian calendar is not unique, but neither is it as simple as it appears. There are medieval discussions as to the religious/legal permissibility of such a gesture, and the difference between norm and practice was dealt with some time ago in an article on Christian and Jewish calendars in medieval Spain.⁵⁶ It should be noted that the Hebrew biblical phrase used as a mnemonic practice applies—in this rabbinic book on Jewish religious—to the Christian calendar.

The question of the “place,” the locality, where the work was penned should also be analyzed. The “two rivers” (*shte neharim*) still need to be identified. What is clear is that Yosef himself draws attention to this local landscape. Although curiously unidentified in the literature on Ibn Ṣaddiq, these must be the rivers he would have seen if looking down from the castle of Arévalo, that is, the Adaja and the Arevalillo. Attempts to see the Jewish astronomer’s locality as part of the Salamanca orbit are not convincing. The river Adaja, tributary of the Duero on its left margin has its origins in the area between la Serrota and the Sierra de Ávila in the Fuente Berroqueña near Villatoro, Ávila—again Ávila and not Salamanca. Arévalo was part of the archbishop of Ávila’s possessions since 1135.

But this formulation is not purely a transparent accumulation of geographical data. “She who dwells on two rivers” is more resonant than expected. There is, firstly, the allusion to *aram naharayim*:⁵⁷ Rashi’s gloss is “beyn shte neharot

⁵⁶ Eleazar Gutwirth, “Fechas judías y fechas cristianas,” *El Olivo* 19 (1984): 21–30.

⁵⁷ Gen. 24:10.

"yoshevet" (she dwells/sits between two rivers), an almost literal antecedent to Yosef of Arévalo's colophon. There is also the similarity to Babylon and its two rivers or to the two rivers of Sura (*Bava Batra* 74). There are echoes of aggadic comments on the two rivers of Babylon, their fertility, and moral message.

There may be a certain irony in such a detailed specification of Arévalo's location. Such attention is prescribed by talmudic authority in the tractate *Gittin* (on divorce) of the Babylonian Talmud 27a:

For a *Get* was once found in the *Beth din* of R. Huna in which was written, "In Shawire, a place by the canal Rakis," and R. Huna said: the fear that there may be two Shawires is to be taken into account ...

The form of the divorce bill, the *get*, as described by Maimonides, includes the specification of the river(s) in the city:

On the ... day of the week, the ... day of the month of ... in the year ... since the creation of the world, according to the numbering we are accustomed to regard here *in the town of* ... (*which is also called* ...), *which is situated on the river* ... and contains wells of water, I ... (who am also called ...), the son of ... (who is also called ...), who am this day in ... (which is also called ...), *the city situated on the river* ... and containing wells of water, do hereby consent with my own will, being under no restraint, and I do release, send away, and put aside thee, my wife,... (who is also called ...), daughter of ... (who is also called ...), who art this day in ... (which is also called ...), *the city situated on the river* ... and containing wells of water.

According to the Code of Jewish Law, the *Shulhan 'Arukha*, [Eben ha-'Ezer, 127, 3], the *get* must mention the place of residence of the parties to the divorce and the name of the place where the *get* is signed by the witnesses (Git. 79b). It is also necessary to mention the name of the river near which the town is situated (Eben ha-'Ezer, 128, 4–7). Similarly, in the *ketubah*, the name of the river is also stated to provide geographical accuracy. In pre-expulsion *ketubot*, Paris is specified as on the rivers Seine and Bièvre, and London, on the Tamesis and Galbrook (Walbrook). It may be noted also that some of the *ketubot* studied by Lacave include mentions of rivers such as the Ebro.⁵⁸

58 Lacave, *Medieval Ketubot*, 78.

Mentioning the rivers of Arévalo in the colophon is not completely unparalleled in Hebrew manuscript colophons,⁵⁹ but it is not the norm. The specification of the river is dictated by legal reasoning linked to the rules of identification of the parties in *ketubot* and *gittin*, but in this case, we are dealing with a colophon where this reasoning does not apply. The mention of the rivers has a certain parodic/ironic, literary quality, especially since they are alluded to but not specified. At the same time it may be recalled that the association of place and book, of toponym and text is not entirely unparalleled in other cultures.⁶⁰ Dante is especially fond of using geographic periphrases, as in the *Inferno*: “the left [face] was black to look at, like those who come from where the Nile rises.”⁶¹ Today we have a clearer understanding of the similarities and differences between literary and historical geography in Hispano-Jewish communities of the late Middle Ages, and the attention to geography in the poetic practices of these communities has been studied.⁶² In other words, a work whose main features are on some levels firmly rooted in the specifics of the particular culture (halakah, Hebrew/Aramaic linguistic practice, as in Yosef ibn Ṣaddiq) can also be arguably seen as including “universal” traits (the rhetorical, poetic elaborations of a toponym).

X

Such breadth of reading, such rhetorical and allusive procedures that resist narrow labeling imply a crossing of cultural borders in both authors. In this context it is also worth recalling with Narváez that the Mancebo “associates the fall of al-Andalus with the punishment of the people of Israel, combining the two peoples as “chosen” and converting “al-Andalucía” into a Promised

59 Michael Riegler, “Colophons of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts as Historical Sources” [Hebrew] (PhD Diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1995).

60 Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), 277. Curtius refers to Claudius Claudianus, that is, the Latin poet who flourished ca. 370–404. In the Claudian *Carmina Minora* (xxx, 147) he finds examples of toponymic periphrasis for reading Homer and Virgil: “the books which Smyrna and Mantua bestowed.”

61 Curtius, *European Literature, Inferno* xxxiv, 45.

62 Eleazar Gutwirth, “De la geografía literaria a la geografía histórica (siglos xv–xvi),” in *Jerusalén y Toledo, Historias de dos ciudades*, ed. Manuel Casado Velarde, Ruth Fine, and Carlos Mata Induráin (Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2012), 133–44; Gutwirth, “Crossing the Borders of Modernity: Towards a Context for Al-Gharnati (Leo Africanus),” *Misclánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 62 (2013): 83–114.

Land that flows with “streams of honey through the ground below” (*arroyos de miel por las breñas abajo*). The use of Hebrew sources in [Arabic character] aljamiado texts for purposes that are not at all polemical is extraordinary.”⁶³ The Mancebo’s discourse thereby acquires unexpected dimensions.

And yet, without in any way minimizing the wonder caused by his writings, it is possible to ease the comprehension of the phenomenon. As has been seen, Yosef’s stylistic procedures are densely allusive to the Bible. This is not only an eccentric personal choice. Similar stylistic choices by some Judeo-*conversos*—in other languages—are frequently in the background. Against this background we could mention the Bachiller de Palma and his *Divina retribución sobre la caída de España en tiempo del noble rey Don Juan el Primero*, which deals with the period beginning with Aljubarrota in 1385 up to the arrival of the Catholic Monarchs in Toro in 1478; possibly written ca. 1480.⁶⁴

He is widely held to be a Judeo-*converso*. To be sure, Scott Ward has made a point of (distancing himself from the sources by) underlining that local historians postulate “that Palma was fonder of land speculation than of agriculture, and that this *típica actitud mercantil* also makes one suspect that he was a New Christian.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, no historian has produced richer and more original archival documentation on the Bachiller de Palma than Gonzalvez Ruiz⁶⁶ and Gómez Menor Fuentes.⁶⁷ They believe him to be a Judeo-*converso* (i.e. someone like the host of the Mancebo).

Today’s attitudes to the Bachiller seem to contrast with those of the past. He is seen as a major model of legitimization and propaganda. What is of interest from our perspective—that is, for the Mancebo’s identification of fifteenth-century Spanish Muslims with the biblical “chosen people” and Andalusia with the biblical “promised land”—is the content and style of the *Divina*

63 María Teresa Narváez Córdova, “Writing without Borders: Textual Hybridity in the Works of the Mancebo de Arévalo,” *Medieval Encounters* 12, no. 3 (2006): 487–97; Narváez Córdova, “Mitificación de Andalucía como ‘nueva Israel’. El capítulo *Kaida del-Andaluziya* del manuscrito aljamiado la Tafçira del Mancebo de Arévalo,” *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 30 (1981): 143–67.

64 Bachiller de Palma, *Divina retribución sobre la caída de España en tiempo del noble rey Don Juan el Primero*, ed. José María Escudero de la Peña (Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos, 1879).

65 Scott Ward, “Historiography, Prophecy, and Literature: *Divina retribución* and Its Underlying Ideological Agenda” (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 2009).

66 Ramón González Ruiz, “El bachiller Palma, autor de una obra desconocida en favor de los conversos,” in *I Simposio Toledo Judaico*, 2 vols. (Toledo: Centro Universitario, 1972), 2:31–48.

67 José Carlos Gómez-Menor Fuentes, “Sobre la familia toledana de la Palma,” *Anales Toledanos* 11 (1976): 207–22.

retribucion. To begin with, as the title proclaims, the Bachiller de Palma understands military/political defeat in terms of divine providence and retribution; this is true in both explanations of the past, that of Aljubarrota and that of Toro. Retribution is of course frequently mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Seeing late-medieval history through biblical lenses is a concomitant of the intertextuality of chronicles written in Hebrew, as has been shown in the cases of the late-medieval chronicles written in Hebrew by Galipapa at the time of the Black Death, Samuel Çarça around 1368 and Hasdai Crescas around 1391, among others. Theodicy -it was shown- is implied by the allusive texture of the language in a number of Hebrew chronicles in the martyrological genre.⁶⁸

The past serves to explain the present in the *Divina retribucion*. It does not have to be the immediate past.⁶⁹ The Bible is a model for Spanish kings even down to the issue of the roads.⁷⁰ There is a certain biblical flavour to the lament over Aljubarrota:

... e las duennas matronas que quedaron viudas de los grandes del
reyeno, fizieron grandes llantos que dezir no sse
puede, a que con angustia e justo dolor podían
dezir: tiró Dios los nuestros manificos valles e
campos de Portogal; ni rrocío ni lluuiia venga sobre
vos ni sean campos de premicias,⁷¹ porque ay fue der-
ribado el escudo de los fuertes d'Espanna y del

68 Gutwirth, "Historians in Context;" Gutwirth, "History and Intertextuality in Late Medieval Spain," in *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*, ed. Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 161–78.

69 "Dios, por su ynfinita eternidat, muda los tiempos e faze marauillosa rrestauración de casos de rreynos e gentes, como las cosas presentes rrespondan a las ya oluidadas ..." *Divina retribución*, 1.

70 "Mas todo ssienpre memorado, como a quien las cosas son presentes, visyta a la tercera e quarta generación de los desplazidos que su potentado ofenden, para condigna punción, segunt lo demostró al primero de los rreyes pedido a bozes del pueblo e no segunt su boluntat, al qual, ya como a cabdillo de su pastoría, en la confirmación del reynado rrecontado ynsinuó quan malamente Amalech ouo rresistido en la via pública, quando el pueblo subió de Egibto, a cabo de luengos años, quiso la ofensa de aquello vengasse con cuchillo rreal. A cuyo cetro principalmente pertenesce asegurar los caminos públicos con acerbo castigo, en detestación de aquel temerario fecho, para ssemejante dar enxenplo a los futuros que presiden por la rreal magestat ..." *Divina retribución*, 2.

71 See for example 2 Sam. 1:21: "Mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed...."

noble Rey, como sy non fuera escogido de Dios,
 y la sangre de los fuertes generosos de Castilla
 cuya lança nunca tornó atrás ni su espada boluió
 ende balde. Fijas d'Espanna, llorad sobre los
 grandes e generosos que vos adornaban de oro e
 de preciosas bestiduras, y como cayeron los fuer-
 tes, a desora perescieron las armas de batalla, y
 non lo queraes dezir en Portogal, porque no se go-
 zen de buestro quebranto las sus fijas.⁷² ¡O quien
 diese a la mi cabeza agua e a los mis ojos fuentes
 de lagrimas para que llorar los pudiese!⁷³

Sometimes it is a mere brief aside that reveals his biblical perspective on contemporary events—as in his observation about Juan II's pomp⁷⁴ or the chapter on Isabella, where fifteenth-century events fulfill biblical prophecies.⁷⁵ Even when referring to a pregnancy, he has to mention the Bible.⁷⁶ His political views are elevated by appeal to the Bible:

... e como los de Portogal, sobre las muertes de los grandes de Castilla,
 han tenido tanto tiempo el sennorio ocupado, aqui se puede dezir lo que
 dixo el profeta al rrey Achab: qid occidisti et insuper possedisti ...

72 2 Sam. 1:20: "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."

73 *Divina retribución*, 9.

74 *Divina retribución*, 20: "ca desde el rrey Salomón acá, nunca tan glorioso rrey fue visto en aparato real."

75 *Divina retribución*, 24: "segunt dixo el profeta, los sus mayores malamente lo faran, e de cada dia blasfemia mi nombre e de toda cabeca doliente e coracon lloroso; e el que adol- ece de la cabeca, tarde o nunca sana, ca el profeta dixo: ¡ay de la tierra cuyo rrey es ninno de discrpcion, e los príncipes della beuen de mannana! E por esto fue captiuado e ligado el mi pueblo, porque non tuvo saber de discrpcion."

76 *Divina retribución*, 26: "... los muy esclarecidos Cesares, Rey e Reyna, nuestros seniores, la mano de Dios reynante produxo, ... cumpliendo aquel veruo dyuino, que por esta dexaria a su padre, e serian dos en carne vna, del muy deseado principe don Juan, sufijo, luz de las Espannas, que Dios guarde...."

Conclusion

A local perspective allows us to examine and question the image of the town. Identifying the precise hyperbole/poetics/rhetoric of this image leads us to search for other possible factors in—and contexts for—the works of Ibn Ṣaddiq and the Mancebo. Both have relatively ambitious intellectual, spiritual, and textual agendas, which are not usually associated with “isolation” and “deserts.” Awareness of the presence of royalty and the nobility in Arévalo is unusual in studies on these two individuals, but these courts, sometimes described in terms of a “microcosm,” might have provided a model of a more cosmopolitan outlook for these writers, inasmuch as they were characterized by contact between personalities, ideas, and texts of different regions and religions. This presence had documented effects on the daily life of the town. The archival documents—fiscal, political, judicial—reviewed here also prove the existence of different communities in the town.

Neither the Rabbi nor the Mancebo are secular. Both are strong adherents of their faiths and their respective particularisms. And yet, just as the Mancebo excites wonder for his breadth of reading and openness to texts and individuals of other religions, the Rabbi does not fit the old image of fifteenth-century Hispano-Jewish decline and isolationism. As has been shown, he is interested in pagan, Christian, and Muslim figures in his chronicle. He praises the scientific works of Muslims and the patronage of Christians for works of visual art. At the crucial moment of poetically summing up his work in brief, he chooses his production of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim calendars as symbol of his achievements. We can compare this centrality of the calendar in his thought with the similar case of the Mancebo. The particular emphasis on religious festivals is common to both. The leading role of toponyms, travels, and individuals in particular locations in the work of the Mancebo has its counterpart in the Rabbi’s text. This becomes clear when observing the sometimes minute practices of (poetic/literary) formulation of “place.” But it can also be discerned behind the apparent incoherence of passages in the chronicle that take for granted a close acquaintance with the geography of Spain in general and that of the war in particular.

Nineteenth-century scholars emphasized the linguistic aspect and therefore the repetitive quality of critiques of Talmud study and Talmudists in this place and period. This is hardly surprising given the densely allusive quality of medieval Hebrew and Neo-Aramaic texts. By now, however, historical research has been able to reconstruct a context for a phenomenon—the need for practical,

useful juridical and legal guidance—that transcends religious boundaries and extends to the Iberian kingdoms as a whole. The reverse of this is the equally historical trend towards works of practical religious instruction. A focus on this phenomenon allows us to understand the affinities between the main tendencies in the works of the Rabbi and the Mancebo.

CHAPTER 8

The *Virus* in the Language: Alonso De Cartagena's Deconstruction of the "Limpieza De Sangre" in *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae* (1450)

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Abstract

This paper analyzes a little-studied aspect of Bishop Alonso de Cartagena (1485–56): that of a theologian embroiled in a polemic dispute with Pero Sarmiento and Marcos García de Mora, organizers of the Toledan anti-converso riots of 1449. In this dispute, Cartagena demonstrates a formidable dialectic force, which he develops in his treatise *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*. His theological discourse would become a battle-ground in which, Bible in hand, he revealed the belligerent, irrational and, at the same time, ideological and heretical nature of his adversaries' arguments.

Cartagena represents the critical conscience of the conversos of his time and epitomizes an ambitious and valiant Christian humanism in his attempt to save the unity of Christian society from the cultural and social rift the Toledan crisis clearly embodied. His originality lies in having understood the importance of language as a medium and, therefore, the need to neutralize the "virus" inside it: the preconceived and artificial conceptions that the Toledo rebels had of conversos.

Furthermore, his assertion that the papacy should maintain full control of the punishment of heretics led him to suggest repeatedly to John II of Castile that matters of faith did not concern the civil authorities.

His role as a theologian reveals itself in his decisive contribution to the expression of a new religious identity: that of the conversos, who thanks to him, began to familiarize themselves with theological concepts such as justification by faith and works such as the *Beneficium Christi*, which would later play a role in the Spanish and European religious crisis of the sixteenth century.

Keywords

conversos – Limpieza de sangre/purity of blood – Bible – language – identity – Paulinism – Inquisition

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To Joy

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The converso bishop Alonso de Cartagena may be regarded as one of the founding fathers of the Spanish nation. According to him, the late medieval Castilian kingdom had everything necessary to become a nation: a land, framed by Castilian territory, a people, made up of Christians and Jews, and a mission to accomplish: to redeem the Iberian lands from Muslim invasion. Another difficult challenge was to bring Old and New Christians together into a unified people. The body of this new nation would be fed by a mixed blood that united the gentleness of the Jews with the pugnacity of the Old Christians. But Cartagena fought against those who sought to establish disparities between New and Old Christians by tearing down his dream of Christian unity. He attempted to discredit their arguments through his masterpiece *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae* which would actually change the course of history for both his contemporaries and future generations of Spaniards. My purpose in this paper is to show the main points of Cartagena's strategy in order to defend the possibility of achieving full Christian unity within the framework of a future national monarchy: the deconstruction of current language and the reinterpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. These aims involved his humanistic posture, insofar as he detected a demagogic texture within the religious discourse of those who sow divisions among Christians.

Cartagena grew up in one of the most illustrious converso families of Burgos. His father, Solomon ha-Levi, a rabbi of the *aljama* (Jewish community) of that city, had converted to Christianity about a year before the violent pogrom of 1391 broke out. Alonso de Cartagena (his Jewish name is unknown) was six years old at the time. After a brilliant political and ecclesiastical career, in 1415 the former rabbi was appointed bishop of Burgos with the Christian name

of Pablo de Santa María.¹ In 1435, the year of his death, the same title was conferred onto his third son, Alonso.

Alonso de Cartagena was also a politician and a diplomat in the service of King John II, and a translator and a commentator of Seneca. He thus embodied the multifaceted pursuits of many fifteenth-century converso intellectuals, such as Pedro Díaz de Toledo, Juan de Lucena, Juan Álvarez Gato, and Hernando del Pulgar, all of whom often demonstrated a “double aptitude” as writers and *letrados* (legal or financial advisors) in the service of both aristocratic families and the monarchy.²

Cartagena has been studied from various perspectives over the last thirty years: as a philosopher, commentator, translator, politician, diplomat, and pedagogical writer, in short, as a humanist.³ He is considered one of the pioneers of diplomacy for the quality of his services to the monarchy,⁴ and much of his mediation at the political level—his intervention in the Council of Basel,⁵ his assertion of the rights of the crown of Castile against the pretensions of Portugal over the Canary Islands—has caught the attention of historians. His famous speech, pronounced in Basel in defense of the Castilian monarchy in the face of English ambitions, was celebrated by Américo Castro, who regarded Cartagena as one of the founding fathers of the ideology of imperial Spain:

¹ Luciano Serrano, *Los conversos D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena. Obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores* (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Arias Montano, 1942); Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos. Historia de la judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios* (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Arias Montano, 1952).

² Stephen Gilman, “A Generation of Conversos,” *Romance Philology* 33.1 (1979): 87–101.

³ Although out of date, Noel Fallows’s historiographic recapitulation brings together a great number of works dedicated to investigating different aspects of the figure of Cartagena, which are still representative of the historiographic interest in Cartagena. See Fallows, “An Annotated Tentative Bibliography,” *La Corónica* 20.1 (1991–92): 78–93.

⁴ Tomás González Rolán and Pilar Saquero Suárez-Somonte, “Los comienzos de la diplomacia moderna en Castilla. Alfonso de Cartagena (1385–1456),” *La Corónica* 39.1 (2010): 147–60. On the cultural effect of his first diplomatic mission to the Portuguese court in 1422, see Abdón M. Salazar, “El impacto humanístico de las misiones diplomáticas de Alonso de Cartagena en la Corte de Portugal entre medioevo y Renacimiento (1421–1431),” in *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton*, ed. A. Deyernond (London: Tamesis Books, 1976), 215–26.

⁵ His speech defending the rights of the Castilian crown against English ambitions, pronounced at the Council of Basel (1434), would become very famous. Alfonso de Cartagena, “Discurso sobre la preminencia del rey de Castilla sobre el de Inglaterra,” in *Prostistas españoles del siglo XV*, ed. Mario Penna (Madrid: BAE 116, 1959), 208. Luis Fernández Gallardo, “Alonso de Cartagena en Basilea: Nuevas observaciones sobre el conflicto anglo-castellano,” *Archivos leoneses. Revista de estudios y documentación de los reinos hispano-occidentales* 48, nos. 95–96 (1994): 9–91.

the Castilian King's universal mission as defender of Christendom before the Muslims,⁶ exalted in the bishop's speech, would be continued by Emperor Carlos v in the sixteenth century.⁷ Castro's insight has been confirmed by the studies of Alan Deyermond,⁸ Maurice Kriegel,⁹ and Luis Fernández Gallardo.¹⁰

With regard to his more strictly literary importance, one of Cartagena's treatises to receive most attention was the short work dedicated to chivalry, the *Doctrinal de los Caualleros*, which is analyzed in the essays of Noel Fallows.¹¹

⁶ Cartagena's "personal wish for a strong monarchy leading to a united nation on the Christian crusade is never far from the surface." See Gerard Breslin, "The *Duodenarium* of Alonso de Cartagena: A Brief Report on the Manuscripts and Contents," *La Corónica* 18.1 (1989): 90–102, esp. 100. Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Guerra justa y guerra santa en la obra de Alonso de Cartagena," *Journal of Medieval Early Modern Iberian Studies* 24 (2013): 341–54. In order to strengthen and unify the Castilian monarchy for what he considered the greater challenge, the struggle against the Muslims, he invoked the spirit of revanchism among the nobility and royalty. For them, whose Hispano-Gothic ancestors were deposed by the Muslims, he wrote *Anacephalaosis*, an *ad hoc* Gothic genealogy, a fabulous history that supposed a greater antiquity of the Castilian monarchs compared to their English counterparts. See Robert B. Tate, "The *Anacephaleosis* of Alfonso García de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos, 1435–1456," in *Hispanic Studies in Honor of I. González Llubera*, ed. Francis Pierce (Oxford: Dolphin, 1959), 387–401. Fernando Díaz Esteban, "Genealogías hispánicas fabulosas basadas en la Biblia," in *Estudios en honor del Prof. D. José María Casciario*, ed. Gonzalo Aranda Pérez, Claudio Basevi, and J. Chapa (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1994), 693–703.

⁷ "Por otra parte, en las palabras del obispo de Burgos ya se diseña la futura política imperial de Carlos v, dirigida a extender una creencia, más que a establecer un sistema de intereses humanos: 'El Señor rey de Inglaterra, aunque faze guerra, pero no es aquella guerra divinal ... ca nin es contra los infieles, nin por esalçamiento de la fe cathólica, nin por estensión de los términos de la cristiandat, mas fázese por otras causas'" Américo Castro, *España en su historia. Cristianos, Moros y Judíos* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2001), 28–30.

⁸ Alan Deyermond, "La ideología del estado moderno en la literatura española del siglo XV," in *Realidad e imágenes del poder. España a fines de la Edad Media*, coord. Adeline Rucquoij (Valladolid: Ámbito, 1988) 171–93; Deyermond, "Historia universal e ideología nacional en Pablo de Santa María," in *Homenaje a Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes*, 3 vols. (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo; Madrid: Gredos, 1985–87) 2:313–24.

⁹ Maurice Kriegel, "Autour de Pablo de Santa María et d'Alfonso de Cartagena: alignement culturel et originalité 'converso,'" *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 41.2 (1994): 197–205.

¹⁰ Luis Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena (1385–1456), una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2002).

¹¹ Noel Fallows, "Doctrinal de los Caualleros de Alfonso de Cartagena, según el Ms. Gam Kongl. Saml. 2219 de la Real Biblioteca de Copenhaguen," *Hispania* 54 (1994): 1107–35; Fallows, "Just Say No? Alfonso de Cartagena, the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, and Spain's

Cartagena the philologist, translator of Cicero, has also been the subject of interest because of the highly personal way in which he incorporated his experience and worldview into his translations.¹² Among the studies of Cartagena, the translator of Seneca, those by the hispanist Nicholas G. Round stand out particularly.¹³

The main lines of scholarly interest in Cartagena would not be complete without also mentioning the attention received by his spiritual and theological writings. We have the three editions of his most important works, the *Apologia super Psalmum "Judica me Deus,"*¹⁴ the *Oracional,*¹⁵ and the *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae.*¹⁶ Nevertheless, none of these investigations examines the spiritual and theological essence of those works. Here, I will attempt to fill part of this void by presenting a study of the *Defensorium* as a polemical text, although the controversy took place among Christians and not in the inter-religious context of a purely theological dispute. It may be for precisely this

Most Noble Pastime," in *Studies on Medieval Spanish Literature in Honor of Charles F. Fraker*, ed. Mercedes Vaquero and Alan Deyermond (Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1995), 129–41.

- ¹² María Morrás, ed., *Alonso de Cartagena, Libros de Túlio: De Senectute, De los Oficios* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, 1996); Morrás, "Una cuestión disputada: Viejas y nuevas formas en el siglo XV: A propósito de un opúsculo inédito de Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo y Alonso de Cartagena," *Atalaya: Revue française d'études médiévales hispaniques* 7 (1996): 63–102. Two discourses by Cicero, *Pro Marcello* and *Cathaniana Confectio*, have been edited in Italy and England, respectively, the former by Andrea Baldisserra (Lucca: Mauro Varoni, 2003) and the latter by Barry Taylor (Bristol: HiPLAM, 2004).
- ¹³ Nicholas G. Round, "Perdóneme Séneca: The Translational Practise of Alonso de Cartagena," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 75.1 (1998): 17–29, discusses the issues of fidelity, translator, and source; Round, "Alonso de Cartagena's *Libros de Séneca*: Disentangling the Manuscript Tradition," in *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict and Coexistence: Studies in Honour of Angus Mackay*, ed. Roger Collins and Anthony Goodman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 123–47.
- ¹⁴ Alonso de Cartagena, "Apologia super Psalmum 'Judica me Deus,'" in *Antología de la Literatura espiritual española*, ed. Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, 4 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española; Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1980), 1:617–30. For a contextualized reading of the *Apologia super Psalmum "Judica me Deus"*, see María Laura Giordano, "La ciudad de nuestra conciencia: Los conversos y la construcción de la identidad judeocristiana (1449–1556)," *Hispania Sacra* 125 (2010): 41–91.
- ¹⁵ Silvia González-Quevedo Alonso, *El "Oracional" de Alonso de Cartagena. Edición crítica* (Valencia: Albatros, 1983).
- ¹⁶ Alonso de Cartagena, *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae* (*Tratado en favor de los judíos conversos*), ed. Manuel Alonso (Madrid: CSIC, Instituto Arias Montano, 1943), 249–50. For a Spanish translation, see Guillermo Verdín Díaz, *Alonso de Cartagena y Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*, ed. Guillermo Verdín Díaz (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1992).

reason that the work seems less intellectual and grounded more on vital necessities. Furthermore, the evaluation of the theological and spiritual aspects offers a valuable tool for the growing interest in the complexity surrounding the intertwining of religion and identity, which is increasingly becoming the backbone of most biographies of converts.¹⁷

Cartagena was a crucial figure in Spanish history, not only because of his staunch support for the Castilian monarchy during a delicate phase in its consolidation of power, but also for his ability to envision a practical way out of a conflict that seriously threatened the *convivencia* among Christians.¹⁸

Defensorium Unitatis Christianae was thus written in a context marked by a process of assimilation of Jewish converts.¹⁹ Indeed, after the pogrom of 1391, many of the Jews who lived in the Spanish *aljamas* entered Christian society. The development of the medieval urban economy and administration required a kind of services and skills provided by conversos. Although their assimilation into the Christian faith did not require excessive efforts, even from the first generation, according to Netanyahu,²⁰ it was not, presumably, a uniform process;²¹ there were generations who adopted syncretistic beliefs, a mixture of Christian and Jewish faith, possible due to an insufficient Catholic indoctrination; others, on the other hand, such as Cartagena's family, the Santa María's, enjoyed enormous success from the very beginning. After the conversion of the patriarch Solomon, they became high-ranking prelates and soldiers in the service of the Castilian sovereigns—while many members of other conversos'

¹⁷ See, for example, Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Miriam Bodian, "The Shaping of Converso Identity in Early Modern Europe", *Past and Present* 143 (1994): 48–76.

¹⁸ This is not the place to look into the nature of this coexistence. Nevertheless, after David Nirenberg's study on the violence and tensions between minorities and the majority population in medieval Iberia (Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)), this vision of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among Christians, Moors and Jews, evoked in the term *convivencia*, coined by Américo Castro in 1947 (*España en su historia. Cristianos, moros y judíos*, [Buenos Aires: Losada, 1948]), needs to be reformulated.

¹⁹ Benzion Netanyahu, *Los orígenes de la Inquisición en la España del siglo XV* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1999).

²⁰ Benzion Netanyahu, *Marranos of Spain: From the Late 14th to the Early 16th century* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1966), 130.

²¹ Scarlett Freund and Teófilo Ruiz, "Jews, Conversos, and the Inquisition in Spain, 1301–1492: The Ambiguities of History", in *Jewish-Christian Encounters over the Centuries*, ed. Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 169–95.

families came to occupy positions in the financial and judicial bureaucracies, including local *tesoreros*, *recaudadores*, and *almojarifes* (bursars, and tax and rent collectors).²²

These occupations, usually practiced by their ancestors, generated popular resentment and hatred, since those officials were blamed for raising taxes or introducing new ones.²³ This widespread anti-Semitic sentiment now converged on a new social figure, one that was successful, brilliant and very well connected with the political centers: the New Christians. It was no coincidence that the *tesorero* of the city of Toledo, against whom the people's rage was directed on the fateful day of January 27, 1449, was the converso Alfonso de Cota. It was the first day of a popular revolt against Toledo conversos that involved even John II's minister, Don Álvaro de Luna, who was accused by the insurgents of supporting the New Christians in their takeover of the city government, usurping the power of the Old Christians. The rebels, led by Pero Sarmiento, Governor of Toledo, and Marcos García de Mora, called Marquillos, indiscriminately plundered the wealth of both the conversos and anyone else who enjoyed a privileged position. After taking the gate, bridge, towers and fortresses, all the defensives strategic zones of the city, the rebels refused to receive their monarch John II, accused for his support of the conversos. He was the target of a bomb thrown at him while he attempted to enter the city to restore order. The insurgents instead received the prince, Henry IV, son of John II, whom they considered more capable. According to Nicolas G. Round, a genuine "civil war" broke out, characterized by "class envy," which pitted the "proletarian" masses against the comfortable and well-off.²⁴ Round notes that even members of the clergy, who received ecclesiastical benefices, were expelled from the city by the rebels, since they were in charge of collecting the rents on the properties or assets they owned.

The motives of the Toledo rebels appeared in two documents that constitute the first public demonstration day of anti-converso sentiment: the

²² See Francisco Márquez Villanueva's influential article "Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo XV," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* 63 (1957): 503–40.

²³ Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Los judíos castellanos del siglo XV en el arrendamiento de impuestos reales," *Cuadernos de Historia* 6 (1975): 417–49.

²⁴ Nicolas G. Round, "La rebelión toledana de 1449, aspectos ideológicos," *Archivum* 16 (1966): 385–446, esp. 415–16.

*Sentencia Estatuto*²⁵ and the *Memorial*.²⁶ According to the first, published on June 5, 1449, and written by Pero Sarmiento, conversos had to be removed from public offices under accusations of corruption and false Christianity: they were accused of Judaizing in secret and being guilty of “invading” almost all public offices.

On September 24 of that same year, Pope Nicholas V issued two bulls condemning both Sarmiento’s statute and the Toledo rebellion. In order to uphold Sarmiento’s position after his public defeat, the rebel leader, Marcos García de Mora, wrote his *Memorial*, which he addressed to the pope and the king. And he went even further, demanding the persecution of that generation of conversos.²⁷ His objective was to influence—in the name of the Holy Spirit—the actions of the monarchy regarding the converso problem and to challenge the pope and King John II, along with his minister, Don Álvaro de Luna,²⁸ and the entire Toledan clergy.

The *Memorial*’s author started his pamphlet by affirming that those who “were excluded” from the obedience to the Catholic Church were:

los incrédulos e dudosos en la fée que son fuera de nos encerrados en ayuntamiento de sinagoga, que propiamente quiere decir congregación de bestias, porque [...] siempre dieron e dan falsos entendimientos a la divina e humana escriptura, testando la verdad e diçiente la letra mata, el espíritu bivifica.²⁹

²⁵ Eloy Benito Ruano, “La Sentencia-Estatuto contra los conversos toledanos,” *Revista de la universidad de Madrid* 6 (1957), and more recently republished by the same author in *Los orígenes del problema converso* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2001), 277–306.

²⁶ Benito Ruano, “El Memorial contra los conversos del bachiller Marcos García de Mora (Marquillos de Mazarambroz),” *Sefarad* 17 (1957): 314–51, republished by the same author in *Los orígenes del problema converso*, 103–40.

²⁷ “Acavar de perseguir aquella xeneración de conversos.” Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso*, 118–19.

²⁸ The other source of hatred in Toledo was Don Álvaro de Luna, who governed Castile from 1420 to 1453. He was accused of being a tyrant and of giving power to the conversos within the government, a typical prerogative of royal officials. Nicholas G. Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Alvaro de Luna* (London: Tamesis, 1986); Eloy Benito Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV, vida política* (Madrid: G. Benzal, 1961).

²⁹ “They are disbelieving and they doubt the faith. Differently to us, they gather at the synagogue (which properly means a congregation of beasts). They always did and still do misunderstand the sacred and human Scripture, questioning the truth and by saying that the letter kills, the spirit invigorates.” Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso*, 103.

In the following pages he pointed out that those “incredulous and doubtful about the faith” were the conversos, also called *falsos cristianos* and *judíos bautizados*. According to García de Mora, the converso approach to the Sacred Scriptures, founded in that Pauline antithesis “la letra mata, el espíritu vivifica” (2 Cor. 3:6) pulled them away from the Christian faith. In other words, García de Mora attributed to the conversos a particular exegetical way of reading the Bible, based on an interpretation “according to the spirit,” a way which he considered a “false understanding” of the Bible. In my opinion, this relationship between conversos and this peculiar interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures was actually a distinctive feature of the conversos’ religiosity: their “circumcision” in the Christian faith was a matter of heart, it was truly spiritual, and not external as the Mosaic Law required (Rom. 2:29). In the first decades of sixteenth century, two conversos, leaders of heterodox movements, Isabel de la Cruz and Juan de Valdés, supported this way of approaching the Bible and living the faith.³⁰

According to the bishop of Burgos, Marquillos and Sarmiento’s ideology, in addition to being heretical, was subversive. Its audacity in attacking the King, suggested to him a comparison to the heretical Bohemian millenarian Jan Huss.³¹

Cartagena also invested much energy in an incisive debate against an enemy who, at times, adopts the form of an avid, “envious,” uncultured, erratic, and bloodthirsty punisher of conversos, accused of “carnal concupiscence towards nuns and virgins, and selling hosts.”³² He did not ignore the visceral personality of the rebellion’s leaders precisely because it was an important factor that could be used to discredit them. Their irrational approach, which exploited medieval anti-Judaism prejudices, made the *Sentencia Estatuto* and the

³⁰ On Isabel de la Cruz, see Maria Laura Giordano, “Nel nome di Paolo: Umanesimo biblico e risonanze converse in Isabel de la Cruz e María de Cazalla (1512–1534),” in *Donne e Bibbia nella crisi dell’Europa Cattolica (secoli XVI–XVII)*, ed. Maria Laura Giordano and Adriana Valerio (Trapani: Pozzo di Giacobbe, 2014), 49–70. On Juan de Valdés, see Margherita Morreale, “La antítesis paulina entre la Letra y el Espíritu en la traducción y comentarios de Juan de Valdés (Rom. 2:29 y 7:6),” *Estudios Bíblicos* 12 (1954): 176–83.

³¹ Round has pointed out that facets of Sarmiento’s ideology could be related to the spirituality of the millenarian movements in Northern Europe, as suggested by the invocation of the Holy Spirit by the author of the *Memorial*. This interpretation of the Toledo revolt interests us in that it brings to light the ideological nature of the motives that prompted the rebellion, their profound irrationality, and their attachment to a grand ambition. See Round, “La rebelión toledana de 1449,” 440.

³² “Concupiscencia carnal de monjas y vírgenes.” Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso*, 123, 116.

Memorial a prototype of the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* that would appear in the years to come.

The Toledo riots would have serious repercussions on the social coexistence of Old and New Christians, since the anticonverso statute was maintained. In Castile, from the 1460s through the 1470s, conversos were increasingly the targets of violence.³³ The social and political rift threatened to become a model of exclusion for Christian society. To counter this threat, the generation of conversos, to whom Cartagena belonged, committed themselves to promoting a redefinition of the political space according to evangelical ideals.³⁴ Following the anti-converso riots in Toledo, certain distinguished jurists and clergymen began writing treatises in order to defend the New Christians. *Instrucción del relator* was penned by one of the most brilliant of John II's legal advisors and royal secretary, the converso Fernán Díaz de Toledo.³⁵ The old Christian friar Lope de Barrientos, bishop of Cuenca, counselor to king John II, re-wrote the *Instrucción* and published it under another title, *Contra algunos zizañadores de la nación del pueblo de Israel*.³⁶ Barrientos developed Díaz de Toledo's penetrating and prophetic intuition about the extreme importance of the Catholic Church recognizing the converso problem as a decisive battle to win: if the Christianity of that generation of New Christians could not be trusted, neither could other converts (from other religions, such as Muslims) be trusted, and Church would have lost its universal mission of evangelizing new people.

The papal theologian Juan de Torquemada, who was regarded as one of the foremost theologians of the time, composed *Tractatus contra Madianitas et Ismaelitas*. In 1450, Alonso de Oropesa, a Hieronymite friar, also started to write his long treatise, *Lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloria plebis Dei Israel*, which he finished fifteen years later.³⁷ The title reproduced the words pronounced by Simeon when the child Jesus entered the synagogue. According to

33 Angus Mackay, "Popular Movements and Pogroms in Fifteenth Century Castile," *Past and Present* 55 (1972): 33–67.

34 Enver Joel Torregroza, "Los aportes de los intelectuales conversos, Pablo de Santamaría y Alonso de Cartagena a la filosofía política hispánica," in *Formas de Hispanidad*, ed. Enver Joel Torregroza and Pauline Ochoa (Bogotá: Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2010), 163–91, esp. 186–87.

35 Nicholas G. Round, "Politics, Styles and Group Attitudes in the *Instrucción del Relator*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 46 (1969): 289–319.

36 Lope de Barrientos, "Contra algunos zizañadores de la nación de los convertidos del pueblo de Israel," *Anales Salmantinos* 1 (1927): 181–204; Ángel Martínez Casado, *Lope de Barrientos, un intelectual de la corte de Juan II* (Salamanca: San Esteban, 1994).

37 Alonso de Oropesa, *Luz para conocimiento de los gentiles*, ed. Luis A. Díaz y Díaz (Madrid: Pontificia Universidad de Salamanca, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1979).

the Hieronymite friar, the exclusion of conversos from Catholic Church signified breaking the communion represented by the Eucharistic sacrifice.³⁸

However, none of these treatises portrayed a concrete utopia for the conversos' future as adroitly as Cartagena's *Defensorium*: his dream of Christian unity, while being grand and ambitious, still outlined a practicable course. Together with those noteworthy conversos, he launched a political-religious proposal based on Pauline and evangelical concepts, a "Teología de la Convivencia" (Theology of Coexistence),³⁹ a vision of a new model of society that fulfilled the ideal of a Christian community open to all believers.

Before writing the official Latin version of the *Defensorium*, Cartagena composed a short Spanish version of it for John II, which unfortunately has never been found. The reason he gave this version to the King, to whom both versions were dedicated, was consistent with the high opinion that Cartagena had of his priestly function and political experience at royal court. Until his death in 1456, he felt that his position as a Church member was a great responsibility and made him a moral guide within the political body.⁴⁰ However, the king's lack of real interest in saving the unity of Christendom turned Cartagena's efforts into a missed opportunity.⁴¹

The polemical tone of the *Defensorium* is apparent even in its prologue, in which Cartagena formulates a clear indictment against those who seek to sow division among Christians: this is a direct accusation against the Toledo rebels. Foolish men—he calls them "criminals"—dare to divide all the brothers in Christ, those who descended from the gentiles and those who descended from the Jews. These differences between Christians were "unacceptable" because

³⁸ For a comparison between Oropesa's tract and Cartagena's *Defensorium*, see Albert A. Sicroff, "Anticipaciones del erasmismo español en el *Lumen ad revelationem Gentium* de Alonso de Oropesa," *Revista de Filología Hispánica* 2 (1991): 315–33, esp. 319; Sicroff, *Les Controverses des status de «pureté de sang» en Espagne du XV au XVII siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1960).

³⁹ Nicolás López Martínez, "Teología española de la convivencia a mediados del siglo XV," *Burgense* 8 (1967): 149–62, here at 59.

⁴⁰ Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Legitimación monárquica y nobiliaria en el *Memoriale Virtutum* de Alonso de Cartagena (ca. 1425)," *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos* 28 (2001): 91–128, here at 118.

⁴¹ Alisa Meyuhas Ginio, "La opción desaprovechada, Alonso de Cartagena y su obra *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*," in *Movimientos migratorios y expulsiones en la diáspora occidental. Terceros encuentros judaicos de Tudela, 14–17 July 1998* (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 2000), 79–94.

the “holy purification” conferred by baptism, the “sacrament of regeneration,”⁴² had made them one people.

Cartagena’s point is to show that the exclusion of the new Christians from public offices, and all the discrimination they suffered, contradicted the evangelical message. Therefore the rebels were essentially heretics. The Pauline doctrine of the “mystical body”⁴³ and its symbolic representation—a large body, of which Christ is the head and everyone is a part of the body while preserving his own unique differences and functions⁴⁴—provided him an image of Christian society completely opposite to that proposed by the rebels. However, this is not the only crux of Cartagena’s argument. He chose many other biblical verses, from the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Epistles of Paul, in order to deconstruct Sarmiento and García de Mora’s manipulative language. Thus, the Scriptures became the battleground between the bishop of Burgos and the conversos’ accusers,⁴⁵ to whom he pointed out their ignorance and misuse of biblical texts.

His argument was developed through four “theorems,” so called for their accurate construction on biblical knowledge.

To prove his first theorem Cartagena demolished the keystone in the texts of the Toledo rebels: the differences between Jews and gentiles with regard to their access to salvation. To demonstrate this the bishop of Burgos employed all the biblical passages that made reference to the union between brothers. In particular, he focused on the most emblematic and powerful of those passages, written by Paul in his letter to the Galatians (3:27–29): “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”⁴⁶

⁴² Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 191. Unlike Cartagena, whose focus in the *Defensorium* is the sacrament of baptism, the Hieronymite friar Alonso de Oropesa specifically highlights Eucharistic bread, which is a food indiscriminately offered to *all* Christians so that, after Paul, it entails a particular meaning of “gathering.”

⁴³ Claude B. Stuczynski, “From Polemics and Apologetics to Theology and Politics: Alonso de Cartagena and the *Conversos* within the ‘Mystical Body?’” in *Conflict and Religious Conversation in Latin Christendom: Studies in Honor of Ora Limor*, ed. Israel Jacob Yuval and Ram Ben-Shalom, Celama 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 253–75.

⁴⁴ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 150, 248.

⁴⁵ In the *Defensorium*, biblical exegesis has always occupied center stage, as well as in the context of polemics between Christians and Jews.

⁴⁶ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 90.

The second theorem followed closely on from the first.⁴⁷ Since they were converted to Christianity, conversos were justified by their faith in the Lord: “the one who is righteous will live by faith” (Rom. 1:17).⁴⁸

Thus, “All Israel will be saved,” concluded Cartagena (Rom. 11:26).⁴⁹ He stressed that this was not a prophecy: the salvation of Israel was being fulfilled at that moment, not in the future. As conversions increased, salvation’s time would approach more rapidly.⁵⁰

Despite all this biblical evidence, there were people who so abhorred the Jewish faith that they were unable to imagine conversos as true Christians. Therefore Cartagena felt that his mission was to become the conversos’ “shield” in order to parry their enemies’ “envy” with the “sword” of the Bible (*gladio Sacrae Scripturae*).⁵¹ It seems hard to conceive a Pauline image that would offer a more powerful picture of Cartagena.⁵² However, the Bible was not only a “sword,” it was also a “medicine” that could cure the “virus in the language”, symbolized as a “sharp knife” that threatened to tear the “whole tunic.”⁵³ To part it would be “fraud” (*dolum*).⁵⁴

Regarding the third theorem, the author explained that the natural effect of baptism is the creation of a new man, who is the result of the union of two peoples and two different lineages in just one person. But this creative effect of

⁴⁷ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 98. The contradiction that lay heavily with the Jews—at the same time a rebellious and chosen people—was removed by Paul: “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.” (Rom. 11:1–2).

⁴⁸ “Omne namque semen israel salvandum est. Quod utique de fidelibus ex Israel descendenteribus intellexit. Neque enim frustra permisit, *in domino iustificabitur*, ac si diceret primo iustitiam ex fide recipient, iustus autem ex fide sua vivet.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 101.

⁴⁹ “Omnis Israel salvus fiet.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 105.

⁵⁰ The complete quotation is: “Reductio tamen plena totius israelitice gentis longissimis temporibus expectanda, quod profecto devote contemplanti et fideli et sincero corde intuenti satis luculenter ostendit, quod, quanto conversiones infidelium israelitarum de tempore in tempus generaliores fiunt, tanto magis tempus illus appropinquare videtur. De quo apostolus dixit: *Omnis Israel salvus fiet*; et per consequens huius laboriosi seculi finis.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 126. See Netanyahu, *Los orígenes de la Inquisición*, 494.

⁵¹ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 124.

⁵² Cartagena, like a soldier of God, wore armor and shield, as suggested in Paul’s Letter to Ephesians (6:14–18).

⁵³ See “Virus” in *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. Peter Glare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁵⁴ “Ut scripture sacre medela curet virus lingue illius qui diligendo verba precipitationis, sicut novacula acuta, festinate tunicam scindere et facere *dolum*.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 124. In Latin, the term “virus” means venom, but it can also mean juice, dribble, humor, and bad odor. Obviously, it did not have the current meaning of a vector of illness.

baptism, the mingling of blood, is precisely what the chiefs of the Toledo rebellion denied. Instead, according to Cartagena's interpretation of the Bible, the mixing of races—the hybrid man and the union of diversity—is an essential and paradigmatic aspect of the universal Christian message and a prototypical evangelical category. Thus, he put forward a new model of social coexistence, according to which blood's hybridity is “sacralized” and the “purity of blood” is desacralized as a return to a pre-Christian age.⁵⁵ This criterion should be the antidote to every kind of racially based intolerance or any ideological attack supported by the pretext of lineage.

Moreover, in the fourth theorem, he confronted Sarmiento's and Marquillos's positions by presenting a further evangelical argument: Christ's sacrifice. In addition to baptism, this theme is another pillar of Cartagena's discourse. He used this concept to underline that Christ is *omnium Salvator*,⁵⁶ and *Ecclesia* is *peritissimus medicus*.⁵⁷ His language insinuated that healing, curing, and saving were the Church's mission and not punishing or dividing brothers. His deconstruction of the *limpieza de sangre* mentality was then complete: only the “medicine” of the “blood of Christ” washes away every kind of sin and therefore makes the reconciliation between Jews and gentiles possible.⁵⁸

As an experienced physician, Cartagena saw himself as healing the collective anguish of salvation with the purifying effects of Christ's blood: all will be redeemed by faith, and conversos were not an exception. The efficacy of Christ's blood is theologically irrefutable and therefore left Cartagena's adversaries without arguments for a rebuttal. But if Christ's blood cleansed every kind of sin, what should the role of civil justice be in religious and spiritual matters? In other words, who was empowered to root out the “heresy” of the Toledan rebels? Cartagena was extremely clear on this point: the pope, as the representative of Christ's authority on earth. The implications of Cartagena's theological discourse were antithetical to the establishment of the Holy Office, the inquisitorial court under the control of the monarchy, created in 1478 by the Catholic Monarchs.

⁵⁵ This is the brilliant synthesis of Bruce Rosenstock; see “Alonso de Cartagena: Nation, Miscegenation, and the Jew in Late-Medieval Castile,” *Exemplaria* 1 (2000): 185–204; and Rosenstock, *New Men: Conversos, Christian Theology and Society in Fifteenth-Century Castile* (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2002).

⁵⁶ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 123.

⁵⁷ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 177.

⁵⁸ “Quid aliud agit nisi ut christus frustra mortuus sit. Frustra autem mortuus est, si aliquis non potest vivificari, mentitur Johannes digito christum et voce demonstrans. *Ecce agnus dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi.*” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 183.

In the *Defensorium*, the “blood of Christ,” regarded as the main spiritual source of human salvation, made an early appearance. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was referred to as *beneficium Christi*,⁵⁹ a term that possibly derives from Melanchthon’s reading of the Gospel commentaries of Erasmus. This concept actually appeared in Italy in the sixteenth century in the treatises of Juan de Valdés,⁶⁰ Giorgio Siculo,⁶¹ and Benedetto Fontanini da Mantova,⁶² and in Spain in those of Bartolomé de Carranza and Juan de Ávila, in the second half of the same century.

Although this is not the place to delve into this issue, it should be noted how ironic the history of Christ’s blood/*beneficium Christi* has been. As this paper shows, it was raised as a standard of Catholicism by a converso bishop in one of the major polemical works of the late Middle Age. His emphasis on the Passion? of Christ is directly related to the “lyrical and emotive anchoritism” of the Hieronymite friars, who became a monastic Order in Spain and Portugal in 1373. The individual and affective spirituality of those solitary men was focused on the “mystery of our redemption” rather than on the cold reasons of theologians.⁶³ After the Lutheran schism, less than a century later, this same concept was suspected of being heretical, as Carranza’s inquisitorial trial demonstrated. It became synonymous with Lutheranism, due to devaluation of the works and the role of the Church in salvation. However, in the first half of the sixteenth century, a famous converso priest and writer, Juan de Ávila, continued to refer to Christ’s blood to defend conversos as Cartagena had done one century before: to recall that it was the “remedy” for the purity of blood mentality and therefore the origin of the conversos’ recovery.⁶⁴

59 Salvatore Caponetto, “Erasmo e la genesi dell’espressione ‘Beneficium Christi,’” *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 37, nos. 3–4 (1968): 271–74. I do not completely agree with Caponetto’s argument regarding the origin of this expression. This is the subject of a forthcoming article.

60 Juan de Valdés, *Trataditos*, ed. Edward Boehmer (Bonn: Vosgos; reprinted in Barcelona: Grafenix, 1983). Massimo Firpo, *Tra Alumbrados e ‘Spirituali’: Studi su Juan de Valdés e il valdesianesimo nella crisi religiosa del ‘500 italiano* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990), 127–76.

61 Adriano Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro grande. Storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2001); Carlo Ginzburg and A. Prosperi, *Giochi di pazienza. Un seminario sul ‘Beneficio di Cristo’* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975).

62 Benedetto Fontanini da Mantova, *Il beneficio di Cristo, con le versioni del secolo XVI documenti e testimonianze*, ed. Salvatore Caponetto (Florence: Sansoni; Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1972).

63 Américo Castro, *Aspectos del vivir hispánico* (Madrid: Alianza, 1970), 57–59.

64 See Giordano Castro, “La ciudad de nuestra conciencia,” 71–91.

With Cartagena's treatise Catholicism recovered its universal mission, as Lope de Barrientos wished: to bring salvation to "all" men ("All Israel will be saved," Rom. 11:26). Nevertheless, after Cartagena's death the question of the salvation of conversos and their equality with Old Christians became a recurring theme in the prose and poetry of converso intellectuals. From the 1460s through to 1474, the Archbishop Alfonso Carrillo directed a literary circle in Toledo. Among its members were many converso poets and writers such as Juan Álvarez Gato,⁶⁵ Pedro Díaz de Toledo, Rodrigo Cota, Pero Guillén de Segovia and Juan Poeta. All shared a longing for the reform of the Church, one that would eliminate differences and distinctions between Old and New Christians based on lineage.⁶⁶

Even three decades later, in 1487, the same Pauline verse ("All Israel will be saved", Rom. 11:26) appeared again in *Católica impugnación*, a polemical treatise with the same unifying purpose, written by Hernando de Talavera, a Hieronymite friar, confessor of Queen Isabel, and bishop of Ávila (1486–93)—perhaps of converso origin. This text was addressed to an anonymous *judaizante*, author of a *libellus* against the Catholic faith. Talavera turned this religious dispute into an opportunity to teach key points in Catholic doctrine, focusing on those that were particularly obscure for those Jews approaching Christianity from a syncretic perspective. Once again, the salvation of people with Jewish roots was still being debated.⁶⁷

It is difficult to detect from which medieval exegetic tradition Cartagena derived his interpretation of Rom 11:25–26. Certainly, his Thomism has already been proven,⁶⁸ and his interpretation of Romans probably followed Thomas, who wrote that gentiles and Jews would be saved in a similar way, "not individually, as they are now, but universally," as a whole people.⁶⁹ However, medieval

65 On the influence of the Pauline thought on Álvarez Gato's poetry, see Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Álvarez Gato. Contribución al conocimiento de literatura castellana del siglo XV* (Madrid: Anejos del Boletín de la Real Academia Española, 1960).

66 Carlos Hernández Moreno, "Pero Guillén de Segovia y el círculo de Alfonso de Carrillo," *Revista de Literatura* 47 (1985): 17–49. See also Gregory Kaplan, "Toward the Establishment of a Christian Identity: The Conversos and Early Castilian Humanism," *La Corónica* 25,1 (1996): 53–68.

67 Hernando de Talavera, *Católica impugnación del herético libelo*, intr. Francisco Márquez Villanueva, pres. Stefania Pastore and ed. Francisco Martín Hernández (Cordoba: Almuzara, 2012).

68 Fernández Gallardo, "Legitimación monárquica y nobiliaria."

69 See Jeremy Cohen, "The Mystery of Israel's Salvation: Romans 11:25–26, in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis," *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005): 247–81, esp. 279. "Et huic

patristic exegesis on this Pauline prophecy, according to Cohen, did not express a resounding opinion either on the number and identity of Jews included in the prophecy of Rom 11:25–26 or on how they could be saved. Thus, patristics left a legacy of “indecisiveness” with regard to this issue. On the other hand, among medieval theologians, Pelagius’s interpretation of Rom 11:25–26 distinguishes itself from others, in that it states that Israel’s salvation had already materialized.⁷⁰ This was not far from what Cartagena wrote. Could the bishop of Burgos have read *Expositio in Romanos 11:26* by Pelagius? Maybe.

In the fourth theorem and the third part of the *Defensorium*, Cartagena provides us with a reflection about the language used in his era. According to him, many words in common use had been “poisoned” by a latent “virus,” for instance, the word “converso.” Cartagena did not agree with using this word to refer to those who converted from Judaism, because “all” the baptized were converted and newly engendered in Jesus Christ, gentiles as well as Jews. The bishop of Burgos, with the patience and tenacity of a craftsman, unmasked other words and concepts, which were apparently neutral but actually carried false and pre-constructed meanings such as *macula* (“stain”) and *pulcritudo* (“purity”). At the same time, the words and concepts “purity” and “impurity” seemed to him completely anachronistic, since every “impurity” or “stain” had been completely removed by the waters of baptism and by the blood of Christ. Cartagena identified an ideological faction coalescing around the concept of “stain” that was putting Christian unity at risk, and he defined it as “heretical” and “schismatic.” In this context, “stain” was no longer a simple word: it became a concept defined by its opposite, the “unity of the Church,” as Cartagena obstinately repeats seven times on a single page.⁷¹ These two opposite concepts—stain/unity of the Church—represented the different visions of two parties emerged from the Toledo uprising, two parties supported by two social groups with antithetical visions of the future coexistence between Christians.

The bishop of Burgos seemed to feel personally involved in this dispute, for he wrote in the first person: “Against me, the heresy of Cain⁷² lifts its crushed head.” Marquillos is depicted as a New Cain, a man who murdered his broth-

concordat quod infra subdit de futuro remedio Judaeorum, cum dicit, *et tunc*, se cum plenitudo Gentium intraverit, *omnis Israel salvus fiet*, non particulariter sicut modo, sed universaliter omnes.” See Thomas Aquinas, “Ad Romanos,” in *Onmes S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria* (Augustae Taurinorum: Petri Marietti, Tipographia Pontificia, 1902), 1:162.

⁷⁰ “Israel was saved” not “Israel will be saved.” Cohen, “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation,” 271.

⁷¹ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 273.

⁷² Meaning Marquillos.

er through the poisoned heresy, symbolized by a serpent. This snake said to Cartagena: “There are things that the blood of Christ cannot wash,”⁷³ indicting him for his Jewish origin. At that point he symbolically cut off the “crushed head” of Marquillo’s “venomous” heresy with the purifying axe carrying the “blood of Christ,” which nothing can resist, not even the “sin” of having Jewish blood in one’s veins.⁷⁴ In the *Defensorium*, Cartagena’s humanistic attitude of questioning words is appreciated in his particular use of allegory and biblical symbolism, which did not hide the message, but figuratively showed the moral deceitfulness of Marquillo’s thinking.⁷⁵

Alonso believed in the “medicine” of the Scriptures as a means of healing the “venom” injected into Christian society by Marquillo’s “heresy.” He shared this vision with his niece, Teresa, a nun who wrote, in around 1470, a treatise titled *Arboleda de los enfermos*.⁷⁶ Under the fresh shadow of groves—this is the meaning of “arboleda”—Cartagena’s niece took refuge. This fresh, tree-covered place allegorized the peaceful effects brought about by the psalms, to cure her physical and spiritual infirmity.⁷⁷

Besides pure lineage, nobility was the other category *par excellence* that was often adduced with regard to Old Christians. Here, too, Cartagena dismantled the traditional identification between nobility and Old Christian, which he had already begun to discuss in a previous treatise, composed between 1444 and 1446.⁷⁸ Cartagena manifested his desire for conversos to attain high social standing, as his family had in the clerical ranks. He recognized that Jews were becoming a people capable of defending themselves and making war as in biblical times.⁷⁹ His brother, Pedro de Cartagena, who was the bodyguard

⁷³ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 183.

⁷⁴ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 184 and 193.

⁷⁵ Kenneth R. Scholberg, “Alonso de Cartagena: Sus observaciones sobre la lengua,” *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 8 (1954): 414–19.

⁷⁶ Teresa de Cartagena, *Arboleda de los enfermos y Admiración operum Dey*, ed. Lewis J. Hutton (Madrid: Anejo del Boletín de la Real Academia Española, xvi, 1967). See also Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez and Yonsoo Kim, “Historicizing Teresa: Reflections on New Documents”, *La Corónica* 32.2 (2004): 121–50.

⁷⁷ James Hussar, “The Jewish Roots of Teresa de Cartagena’s *Arboleda de los enfermos*,” *La Corónica* 35.1 (2006): 151–69.

⁷⁸ In the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, mentioned above, he claimed that knighthood was a profession that, like many others, required a suitable education. He attempted to arouse from their torpor those members of the simpleminded nobility who thought that having “pure blood” or “being audacious” (*denuedo solo del corazón*) was enough to be a good knight. See Noel Fallows, “Just Say No? Alfonso de Cartagena,” 131.

⁷⁹ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 214–18.

of John II, was a convenient case in point. Cartagena thus suggested to the monarch that conversos should be allowed to enter nobility, regarded as a social group whose medieval purpose was to defend the sovereign and his territory. Like other nobles, conversos should take an oath of allegiance in defense of the fortresses and defend the King and his kingdoms with their blood. He convincingly demonstrated, by recounting stories from the Old Testament, the capacity of Jews in the skillful use of weapons. According to Cartagena, there were no reasons why they should be excluded from nobility: their belonging to the Davidic line, in the past, and their embodiment of a moral ideal of nobility, in the present,⁸⁰ conferred upon them a certain superiority vis-à-vis Old Christians. In brief, Cartagena defended two kinds of nobility for conversos: the first consisted of their *eminentia* as descendants of David's line,⁸¹ whereas the second was a candidacy earned by the sweat of their brow for their competent and effective service rendered to the Castilian monarch. This "nobilitas,"⁸² claimed by Alonso de Cartagena, was expressed in his family's coat of arms: a white lily in a green field, a clear allusion to the purity of the Virgin Mary, for they boasted of being her descendants.

Another converso, Mosén Diego de Valera, coined, in his *Espejo de la verdadera nobleza* (1451), a meaning of nobility very similar to that of Cartagena. He became the leading expert and an indisputable authority in all matters of nobility, honor and protocol in the court of John II. His conception of nobility was "performative" rather than a static condition:⁸³ it dealt with the quality of the services given to the monarch, the personal skills and the capacity to successfully interact with the environment. He indirectly legitimated the

80 Adeline Rucquoi, "Noblesse de conversos?" in *Qu'un sang impur ... Le Conversos et le pouvoir en Espagne à la fin du Moyen Âge (Actes du 2 colloque d'Aix-en-Provence, 1994)* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1997), 89–108, esp. 93. According to Rucquoi, Cartagena, as well as Diego de Valera, son of a Jewish royal physician and author of many treatises on nobility, "reposent sur un concept de la nobless comme qualité moral, inhérent à l'homme, indépendante de sa religion ... Le juif, comme le musulman, peuvent être des hommes de *virtus*, et s'ils continuent à vivre 'virtueusement' après leur conversion, conserver leur nobless." On the same topic, see E. Michael Gerli, "Performing Nobility: Mosén Diego de Valera and the Poetics of Converso Identity," *La Corónica* 25.1 (1996): 19–36.

81 Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 153.

82 "Los hispano-hebreos se sentían 'fidalgos per natura' por haber sido su linaje planeado por Dios, con paternidad espiritual atestiguada por la misma palabra divina." Américo Castro, *De la edad conflictiva. Crisis de la cultura española en el siglo XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1978), 45.

83 Gerli, "Performing Nobility," 24.

ambitions of an urban ruling class which reshaped the social and cultural meanings associated with the aristocratic lifestyle. A similar meaning of honor and nobility was shared by members of Carrillo's circle. These writers and poets, mentioned previously, were preparing a new definition of nobility which could have legitimated the candidature of a converso ruling class, especially since the rebellious aristocracy provoked, from 1465 to 1468, the fall of King Henry IV. Instead the crisis of monarchical power merely created the conditions for increasing anti-converso uprisings.

The other aspect of converso nobility, according to Cartagena—their founding role in the history of Christianity as descendants of David's line—is fully developed in Juan de Torquemada's apologetic treatise.⁸⁴ His emphasis of the greatness of the Jewish past turned out to be an “outcome of a specific historical process of conflict in which lineage became a newly meaningful way of thinking about religious identity amongst Christians and Jews.”⁸⁵

In the final section of the *Defensorium*, the bishop of Burgos directly confronted the figure of ideologue behind the anti-converso rebellion in Toledo, Marcos García de Mora. Cartagena invalidated his juridical arguments, demonstrating that Marquillos had tried to twist Canon Law (Gratian's *Decretum*) and had given it an anachronistic interpretation.⁸⁶ Once again, the bishop of Burgos remarked that this misinterpretation was the result of the visceral personality of his adversary, who was “jealous” of the “newly rich” conversos. Using metaphorical language, Cartagena implied that García de Mora was, therefore, obliged to behave like “a snake” that was being forced to abandon its hiding place and to find refuge elsewhere,⁸⁷ by which he meant that Marcos could no longer use those accusations against conversos.

Cartagena finished his *Defensorium* by directly addressing His Majesty, John II, offering him his interpretation of the Toledo disturbances of 1449; in brief, it was “a lengthy criminal obstinacy.” However, he stressed that the duty of punishing the “schismatics” and rooting out the dangerous heresy belonged

⁸⁴ For more information about the polemical documents on the Toledo rebellion of 1449, see Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez, “Prelude to the Inquisition: The Discourse of Persecution, the Toledan Rebellion of 1449, and the Contest of Orthodoxy,” in *Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity: Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Wout J. van Bekkum and Paul M. Cobb (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 47–74.

⁸⁵ David Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” *Past and Present* 174 (2000): 3–41, esp. 6.

⁸⁶ Gregory Kaplan, “Circular Patterns: Hermeneutic Reflections of Gratian's *Decretum* in Alonso de Cartagena's *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*,” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 26.2 (1992): 179–92.

⁸⁷ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 258–59.

to the pope alone, which did not mean that secular authorities did not have the obligation to prosecute them as ordinary criminals. Cartagena pronounced a warning to the political authorities, invoking the pope's *plenitudo potestas*, the doctrine according to which the pontiff was a universal monarch: "In ecclesia militante uno est qui presidit universis ... fiet unum ovile et unum pastor" ("In the Church there is only one who has authority over everybody ... there is only one flock and one shepherd") (Job 10:16).⁸⁸ Even if princes, prelates, and people were obliged to support the Church, the defense of the faith was the exclusive prerogative of the pope. The bishop of Burgos had discerned the collusion of interests between the Old Christians and the monarchy against the conversos in the way that justice was administered after the Toledo rebellion: Sarmiento's followers were treated with a gentle hand by John II, who, on October 28, 1450, obtained papal documents suspending the excommunication imposed on the rebels by the bulls issued in 1449,⁸⁹ *Humani generis inimicus*, a papal condemnation of Sarmiento's "heresy", and other documents attached to it.⁹⁰ Pope Nicolas V removed these former interdicts and absolved the Toledo inhabitants of all crimes against converso people. The same pope, under Álvaro de Luna's request,⁹¹ issued in 1451 a third bull aiming to establish the Inquisition in Castile in order to investigate the Catholic reputation of any converso, including those who had episcopal rank. According to Netanyahu, this bull was neutralized by the Relator, Fernán Díaz de Toledo, an influential converso at the King's court, who presumably convinced, with Cartagena's help, John II to reject this bull, which was actually never published. Cartagena's involvement in this issue, as suggested by this fascinating hypothesis, seems coherent with the *Defensorium*'s reminder of the Church's exclusive responsibility in rooting out heresy after the Toledo uprising.

Cartagena maintained the same attitude as bishop of Burgos: from 1448 through 1453 he defended the privilege of exemption and the direct dependence on the Holy See of his Burgos diocese with respect to the archbishop of Toledo's claim of extending his primacy to the diocese of Burgos. Cartagena fought against the then archbishop of Toledo, Alonso Carrillo, and thanks to

88 Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 291.

89 See these bulls in Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV*, 215–16, 223–27.

90 For the texts of these bulls, see Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV*, 198–205. Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, "Las bulas de Nicolás V acerca de los conversos de Castilla," *Sefarad* 21 (1961): 22–47.

91 Netanyahu, *Los orígenes de la Inquisición*, 613–15.

the pontifical and royal mediation he finally maintained his diocese, which was dependent only on the Holy See.⁹²

In 1461, five years after Cartagena's death, King Henry IV (son of John II) ratified a prohibition against conversos occupying public offices.⁹³ Again, in that same year, there was a further attempt to create an Inquisition in Castile: King Henry IV asked the pope for the faculty of choosing four inquisitors—two for the kingdoms of New Castile and Andalusia, and two for Old Castile. Pope Pius II accepted these royal requests by issuing a bull, *Dum fidei catholicae* (1462), which permitted the establishment of the Inquisition but under certain conditions. It seemed clear that what Henry IV had in mind was a “national Inquisition” controlled by the monarchy.⁹⁴ In that same period, however, Cartagena's notion of the Church's responsibility in punishing heresy materialized when the Hieronymite friar Alonso de Oropesa undertook an “Episcopalian Inquisition” in order to pacify Toledo.⁹⁵ The results of his investigation—there was no heresy among conversos but only a lack of Christian instruction which could be emended by a more significant engagement of the bishops—definitively convinced Henry IV to not implement the papal bull.

After 1449, Toledo had been reduced to a corpse, as Cartagena called it—torn asunder and left without a unified government and citizenry, to the point where it could no longer be called a city. Even Christian unity would have been reduced to a corpse if the threat of Marquillos's “heresy” had not been eradicated without delay and by the proper hand, that of the pope! “A little error in the beginning becomes great in the end,” and “it would break out like a fire,” Cartagena said prophetically, quoting Aristotle.⁹⁶ The monarch did not heed his warning. He was too close to the common people and not attentive enough to his intellectuals, even though Cartagena's moral authority and the high quality of his services to the monarchy had made him one of the most influential of the King's advisors.

⁹² Jorge Díaz Ibañez, “Alonso de Cartagena y la defensa de la exención del obispado burgalés frente al primado toledano,” *En la España medieval* 34 (2011): 325–42.

⁹³ Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso*, 29.

⁹⁴ Stefania Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada. Inquisizione di Castiglia e i suoi critici (1460–1598)* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 2003), 26–30.

⁹⁵ Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, 7–30.

⁹⁶ Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 289. The complete quotation: “Et Iheronimus ait: Arrius in Alexandria una scintilla fuit, sed qui non statim oppressus est, totum orbem eius flamma populata est.”

Conclusions

Cartagena regarded Marcos García de Mora's *Memorial* and Sarmiento's statute as a cesspool of divisive tendencies that would asphyxiate the young faith of New Christians. A social and religious schism was looming over the Spanish kingdoms and future events confirmed the bishop of Burgos's prescience. However, the first half of the fifteenth century was a period in which it was still possible to forge a different model of society instead of the one that would follow. Cartagena attempted to do that by setting up a counter ideology of Christian society, a vision of a new man regenerated by the waters of baptism and saved by the blood of Christ. Both these elements had to be the antidote to the "virus" of division injected into the social body through the language.

Cartagena's vision of the Christian faith was maternal and curative: it included everybody and purified the language from manipulation and corruption. The "sword of the Bible" was the instrument he used to cut the snake's head of Marquillos's heresy, before its venom intoxicated the whole Castile. Cartagena worked to neutralize the categories of anti-converso hatred, hollowing them out from the inside. He emptied the terms "converso," "stain," "nobility" and "purity of blood" of their meanings and the underlying interpretation they entailed. With the *Defensorium* he dismantled every possible justification or theological legitimization of the distinction between Old and New Christians. Four years after the *Defensorium* appeared, he continued deconstructing those words and concepts—sediments of the anti-converso ideology—in the *Oracional*,⁹⁷ a less incisive but more intimate work than the *Defensorium*.

Cartagena harbored doubts that the process of reinforcing the functions of civil power to the detriment of the jurisdiction of the Roman papacy was good for Christian unity. Despite his contribution to the consolidation of monarchic power,⁹⁸ he reproved a King who seemed to have forgotten the limits of his power vis-à-vis the papal responsibility of rooting out heresy. As is well known, twenty eight years later, in 1478, an ecclesiastical court independent of Rome and at the service of the Catholic Monarchs was created: its first victims were precisely the conversos, and it thus institutionalized the popular hatred that had erupted in Toledo in 1449.

⁹⁷ González-Quevedo, *El "Oracional" de Alonso de Cartagena*; Giordano, "La ciudad de nuestra conciencia," 59–61.

⁹⁸ See Cartagena's annotation to Seneca's *De Clementia*. Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política. A propósito de un fragmento inédito de Alonso de Cartagena," *En la España medieval* 16 (1993): 119–34.

The socio-religious “effect” Cartagena expected from the sacrament of baptism, the first gathering moment of the Catholic faith, was the union of Old and New Christians. One cannot persecute a population of baptized people—this was essentially the message—because that would annul the efficacy of baptism and all the gifts that follow: equality among men, illumination as a form of knowing God, the saving force of the “blood of Christ” and justification by faith. The unity of Christians was a dream announced through the multiple biblical resonances painstakingly gathered in the *Defensorium*.

This work unveiled a very specific reading of the Bible, in which Paul’s teaching is the unifying element of Cartagena’s theological and spiritual discourse. This “Pauline enthusiasm,”⁹⁹ which he shared with friars such as Oropesa and Torquemada, and the poets and writers of Carrillo’s circle, among others, was motived by what Marquillos correctly recognized as a converso belief: the opposition between Mosaic Law (“la letra”) and a spiritual religion. Paul made Christianity a more attractive and closer religion than the exhausted ritualism or the Averroistic rationalism of the Jewish *aljamas* before the mass conversion of 1391.¹⁰⁰

This may explain why, more than sixty years before Luther, Cartagena evoked the Pauline concept of justification by faith to affirm that descendants of Israel had already became Christians and were saved only because of their faith.

Cartagena’s treatise pointed to inquisitorial troubles in the future. In fact, justification by faith, as he emphasized, was the immediate theological background to the most important heresy of the sixteenth century,¹⁰¹ the *iluminismo/alumbradismo*, condemned in the edict of Toledo in 1525 and marked by the decisive involvement of the conversos in La Alcarria. In my opinion, Cartagena’s reading of Paul shoud be sufficient to encourage a general review

99 Francisco Márquez Villanueva, “El problema de los conversos, cuatro puntos cardinales,” in *De la España judeo-conversa. Doce estudios* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra: 2006), 63. This article was originally published as “The Converso Problem: An Assessment,” in *Collected Studies in Honour of Américo Castro 80th Year*, ed. Marcel P. Hornick (Oxford: Lincombe Lodge Research Library, 1965), 397–33.

100 Francisco Márquez Villanueva, “Nascer y morir como bestias’ (Criptoaverroísmo y criptojudaismo),” in *De la España judeo-conversa. Doce estudios* (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2006), 203–27. This article was originally published with the same title in *Los judaizantes en Europa y en la literatura castellana del Siglo de Oro*, ed. F. Díaz Esteban (Madrid, 1994), 273–93.

101 Stefania Pastore, *Un’eresia spagnola. Spiritualità conversa, alumbradismo e Inquisizione (1449–1559)* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2004).

of *iluminismo/alumbradismo*. Its similarities with Lutheranism, as well as their common affection to Paul, maybe were only an unfortunate coincidence.

The *iluminados* obviously avoided any direct references to that Pauline concept, especially after Luther's interpretation of Rom 5:1 led him to break away from the Catholic Church. However, the *iluminados'* spirituality cannot be understood outside of a Pauline approach to the faith.¹⁰² The Holy Office updated the ancient anti converso persecution by codifying their religious experience of inner spirituality as essentially heterodox: obviously the inquisitorial trials against *alumbrados, erasmizantes* and *luteranos* were full of New Christians.

Cartagena's legacy (Paulinism, nobility as a moral status, a critical approach to language) gave the following generations of conversos¹⁰³—who were engulfed in a battle over lineages that divided Spain throughout the Modern Age—formidable credentials. When Cartagena “defended” the conversos, he was also telling them who they were. However, for many of them, nourishing this collective and obsessive *nosce te ipsum* was a vital issue.¹⁰⁴ It was the secret weapon that New Christians usually employed against those who demagogically disguised a social rivalry under a racial rage and religious suspicion.¹⁰⁵ In the following century, it burst out in many forms of a fratricidal confrontation which deprived religious life and caused traumatic effects in the socio-economic sphere: the structural economic weakness of imperial Spain was brought about by striking at its dynamic financial and entrepreneurial class.

Cartagena's dream of Christian unity was frustrated, but the *Defensorium*'s image of conversos as a consistent people, deeply-rooted in the Christian faith, remained undefeated: no rebuttal, at that same level, was made known. The conversos' identity was shaped more by the dynamism of the religious and social conflict than their Jewish background. The bishop of Burgos did not encourage victimization or resentment: around 1470, Cartagena's niece, Teresa, allegorized the converso soul as a well defended city—*La ciudad de nuestra conciencia* (The city of our conscience)—a fortress in which frequent negative definitions, that were associated with conversos, such as Judaizers, *marranos*,

¹⁰² María Laura Giordano, “Nel nome di Paolo.”

¹⁰³ See Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Álvarez Gato*.

¹⁰⁴ See Francisco Márquez Villanueva, “Presencia judía en la literatura española. Releyendo a Américo Castro,” in *La sociedad medieval a través de la literatura hispanojudía*, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Ángel Sáenz-Badillo (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1998), 27.

¹⁰⁵ See Henry Kamen, “Limpieza and the Ghost of Américo Castro: Racism as a Tool of Literary Analysis,” in *Hispanic Review* 64 (1996): 19–29.

alborayques,¹⁰⁶ and crypto-Jews, could not enter. Teresa adopted a defensive position, but it was essentially based on a collective self-awareness, as taught by Cartagena.¹⁰⁷

After the Inquisition was established, only a few select personalities criticized openly the purity of blood statutes and the Holy Office.¹⁰⁸ For more than a century, the Pauline arguments of the *Defensorium* were constantly alive in their minds.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ According to the unknown author of *Libro del Alboraïque*, written around 1460, the forced converts were neither Jews, nor Christians nor Moors. Their identity was unclear, like that of the strange beast called “alboraïque,” which was neither horse nor mule. The entire text of the *Libro del Alboraïque* has been published in Nicolás López Martínez, *Los judaizantes castellanos y la Inquisición en tiempos de Isabel la Católica* (Burgos: Pontificia Universidad Eclesiástica de Salamanca, 1954), 391–404.

¹⁰⁷ Teresa de Cartagena, *Arboleda de los enfermos y Admiración operum Dey*, 11–114, esp. 46. In the social context of increasing anti-converso unrest and hostility, the *city of our conscience* became a metaphor for an interior refuge for her suffering soul, and for those who needed to rest in a peaceful “place.” See Giordano, “*La ciudad de nuestra conciencia*,” 43–71; and “Il lupo e l’agnello vivranno insieme (Is. 11,6): La sconfitta di un’utopia conversa nell’opera di Teresa de Cartagena (1449–1478),” in *Donne e Bibbia nel Medioevo (secoli XII–XV) Tra ricezione e interpretazione*, ed. Kari Elisabeth Borresen and Adriana Valerio (Trapani: Il pozzo di Giacobbe, 2011), 275–92.

¹⁰⁸ Márquez Villanueva, “El problema de los conversos,” 55.

¹⁰⁹ María Laura Giordano, “Como aguilas nos avemos de renovar: Reforma de la Iglesia y Beneficio de Cristo en Hernando de Talavera (1475–1507),” *e/humanista/Conversos* 6 (2018), 94–110.

CHAPTER 9

Apologetic Glosses—Venues for Encounters: Annotations on Abraham in the Latin Translations of the Qur’ān

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present a set of glosses to the Qur’ān written by the sixteenth-century Spanish convert Juan Gabriel and to analyze them in the context of apologetic argumentation. The glosses come from a translation commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo (1518). I present here the index of topics covered by the glosses and argue for their conciliatory character. I also select glosses that focus on the identity of Abraham and compare them with annotations that appear in other Latin translations of the Qur’ān. The conclusion of this study is that, although there was a tradition in Latin Europe of glossing the Qur’ān in particular places, for example in passages where biblical figures are mentioned, Juan Gabriel used this tradition to present Islam as compatible with Christianity rather than a heresy.

Keywords

translations of the Qur’ān – conversos – Moriscos – Anti-Muslim Polemic – glosses

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The author of the glosses that are the object of this article, Juan Gabriel of Teruel, converted to Christianity at the beginning of the sixteenth century, at a time and place where conversion of the Moriscos (Muslims converted to Christianity) was a highly charged issue. In some of the Iberian territories the Mudéjares (Muslim under Christian rule) were already compelled to embrace the Christian faith, for the salvation of their own souls as well as for the sake of those around them, as the existence of Islam, especially in the vicinity of Christians, was deemed perilous. In the Crown of Aragon the mandatory conversion came relatively late (1526), although it was longingly awaited by some clergymen who would prepare the ground by organizing sermons and preaching in the mosques of the rural *morerías* (Muslim settlements) of Aragon.

In the midst of these religious persecutions Juan Gabriel must have decided to make his weak point his asset: not only did he change his status from a Muslim *faqīh* (pl. *fuqahā*) to Christian, but he also started to instruct Catholic preachers on the tenets of Islam, so that they could preach against it with greater knowledge and, therefore, more conviction. Juan Gabriel was almost certainly the former *faqīh* of Teruel, known before by his Muslim name, 'Ali Alayzar, and he was probably forced to receive baptism in 1502 together with the other Mudejars in Teruel.¹ Fray Johan Martín de Figuerola, an ecclesiastical figure connected to the bishop of Barcelona, Don Martín García, from whom he took over the campaigns to preach to the Moors, was not reticent about his collaboration with the convert from Teruel. Figuerola explains in his work *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán* (Valencia, 1521)² that he knew some Arabic and was acquainted with the Qur'ān thanks to the teachings of Maestre Johan Gabriel, a convert to Christianity.³ In his work, Figuerola gives a picturesque account of his collaboration with Juan:

The fifth dispute took place on the day in which they were having the festivity of the birth or nativity of their prophet, and it was after the moon

¹ According to Archivo Histórico Provincial de Teruel, *Consejo de Teruel*, Carpeta Azul, Documento 274, quoted by Ernesto Utrillas Valero, "Los mudéjares turolenses. Los primeros cristianos nuevos de la Corona de Aragón," in *De mudéjares a moriscos, una conversión forzada. Teruel, 15–17 septiembre 1999, Actas* (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, 2003), 809–26, esp. 820, 823. On Juan Gabriel, see also Starczewska, "Juan Gabriel," in *Christian–Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History. Vol. 6, Western Europe (1500–1600)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 415–19.

² Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, MS Gayangos 1922/36.

³ Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic: Juan Gabriel as Qur'ān Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo," *Al-Qantara* 35, no. 2 (2014): 409–59, esp. 412.

called *ayora*,⁴ after which there comes another moon, and it is the one in which the above mentioned solemnity is celebrated by all the Moors, bigger than no other; and so I was forewarned about that day, being well informed about the history and how he was born, by one that was called meister Johan Gabriel, a faqīh who was from Teruel, and now by God's grace a Christian, at whose petition all the Moors of the land of Teruel and of the land of Albarracín converted: and so informed by the aforementioned, we both went to this festivity in the mosque, and we found a crowd of them, praying already with their faqīh; and so we sat on a bench within their sight. And I was always interrogating the aforementioned meister Joan Gabriel, telling him to keep close watch for when they were finished, in order that the faqīh and those who were with him would not leave, so we could dispute and confound them, that they were doing very wrong to celebrate a festivity of such a person as Muḥammad, and that they were surely aware and it was written in their Qur'ān that Jesus Christ, son of the Virgin Mary, was much more excellent a prophet and very just and he did not sin, nor could he sin; and similarly about his sacred mother, and that they were not to celebrate them, and that they should see that it was true; and that their prophet was bad and a sinner, their very Qur'ān says so which I have very well studied and read; and many other things which I could introduce in order to dispute but of which there is no mention in this work in order not to be prolix.⁵

⁴ According to Guillén Robles, *ayora* seems to be a Morisco equivalent of *Zafar* (Şafar), followed by Rabī' al-awwal (Rabī' 1), which is the month in which Mawlid (the birth of the Prophet) is celebrated. Francisco Guillén Robles, *Leyendas de José hijo de Jacob y de Alejandro Magno sacadas de dos manuscritos moriscos de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid* (Zaragoza: Imprenta del Hospital Provincial, 1888), lxvi. Otherwise, it could be interpreted as the Day of Ashura, the 10th day of the month Muharram.

⁵ Quinta disputa fué el día que tenían la fiesta del nacimiento ó natiuidad de su propheta, que fué empues de la luna dicha ayora; despues de la cual viene otra luna, y ésta es en la cual se festiva dicha solemnidat por todos los moros, mayor que no ninguna de las otras; y assí yo preuenido para la tal jornada, siendo bien informado de la historia y de cómo nació, por uno que se decía maestre Johan Gabriel, alfaquí que era de teruel, y ahora por la gracia de Dios, xpno, á instancia del cual se convirtieron todos los moros de tierra de teruel y de tierra de albarrazín: y assí por el dicho informado, fuimos los dos á la dicha festiuidad á su mesquita, y hallamos la muchedumbre dellos, ya con su alfaqui aziendo la oración; y assí nos assentamos en un banco en vista de ellos. Y yo estaba siempre interrogando al dicho maestre Joan gabriel, diciéndole, que tuviese oio cuándo acabarían, y esto por respeto que no se fuese el alfaqui y los que estauan con él, para poderles disputar, y confundir, que azían muy mal de venerar fiesta de semejante persona, que mahomet, como cierto constaua á ellos y estaua escrito en su alcoran, que Juxpo, hijo de maría virgen, era muy más exelente propheta y muy justo, y

This quotation paints a picture of the kinds of situations in which the Qur'ānic material was used. In these polemical engagements, the figure of an intermediary who was both learned in Islam and willing to provide anti-Muslim argumentation was vital. It is therefore not surprising that—just as Juan Gabriel accompanied Figuerola during his campaigns—another convert, Juan Andrés, author of *Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán*, 1515 (Confusion or Confutation of the Muḥammadan Sect and of the Qur'ān),⁶ claimed to have translated the Qur'ān and its glosses upon the request of Martín García, archbishop of Barcelona, preacher to the Catholic Monarchs and Inquisitor of Aragon. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the verbal confrontation described above is built around the same focal points that appear both in Juan Andrés's work and Juan Gabriel's glosses, namely the importance of Jesus and Mary within Islam.

As far as we know, Juan Gabriel never wrote a treatise of his own; unlike Juan Andrés, he did not author any confutation of the Qur'ān or the Muslim faith. He did however leave a legacy. When Juan Gabriel was asked by the Italian cardinal Egidio da Viterbo to translate the Muslim holy book into Latin, the request granted the convert liberty to speak his own voice, Juan Gabriel prepared the Latin translation and even added to it some interpretative glosses. These glosses to the Qur'ān are probably the only piece of writing that is authored entirely by Juan Gabriel, and for that reason alone they constitute quite a unique testimony of the convert's opinion of his former religion. But there is more to the story than that; broadly speaking, there are some privileged places in the text—in any text—that allow for some liberty, which the formal frames of a written piece otherwise restrain. These tend to be prologues, the explicit, colophons, and the glosses. There is hardly any text that is more rigid than a sacred one: the division into parts and subparts is fixed by convention, each verse is numbered, and the meaning of each word is granted transcendental importance. However, if one—especially a non-believer—decides to gloss a sacred text, the variety of remarks and interpretations to be made is endless.

que no peccó, ni pudo peccar; y así mismo de su madre sagrada, y que destos no hiciessen ninguna fiesta, que mirassen si era razón; y que si su propheta fué malo y peccador, su mismo alcorán se lo dize; el cual yo tengo muy bien visto y leydo, y otras muchas cosas que traya para desputar las quales no se narran en la presente obra, por no ser prolixo. Francisco Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, lxvi.

6 Juan Andrés, *Confusión o Confutación de la Seta Mahomética* [Valencia, 1515], ed. Elisa Ruiz García and María Isabel García-Monge (Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2003). On the link between these authors, see Ryan Szpiech, Mercedes García-Arenal, and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Deleytaste del dulce sono y no pensaste en las palabras: Rendering Arabic in the *Antialcoranes*," *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 5.1 (2018), 99–132.

This study is concerned with the tradition of glossing the Qur'ān in Latin and in particular with Juan Gabriel's contribution in this field.

To Know is to Reject: Reading the Qur'ān for Polemical Purposes

Over the centuries of Christian-Islamic polemics, the Christian side had built its discourse around two main focal points, namely the life of the Prophet Muḥammad and the contents of the Muslim holy book. As for the Prophet, the accusations made by the Christian writers concentrated first and foremost on the intentionality of his preaching, in contrast to divine inspiration: the Pseudo-Prophet,⁷ the Christians argued, had invented the religious message in order to sanction polygamy and promiscuity (especially for his own personal benefit, but also with a view to gaining male supporters), to justify the conquest of territory, and even to account for his epileptic fits by saying that he had been inspired by the archangel Gabriel.⁸ The argumentation against the Qur'ān was intrinsically connected to the condemnation of Muḥammad; just like Muḥammad was not a *real* prophet, the Qur'ān was not *really* a sacred text. The reasons behind this claim were numerous: (1) it had not been revealed, but instead it had been composed for personal and political purposes, (2) it is badly written (in contrast to the Bible) and therefore incomprehensible, (3) it misuses ideas from earlier Scriptures, i.e. the Pentateuch and the Gospels, and contains errors in its narration of biblical events, and (4) in contrast to

⁷ The term *pseudo-prophet* (ψευδοπροφήτης) was first used in reference to Muḥammad by John of Damascus in his work *Concerning Heresy* (late 740s), where Islam is described as the 100th or 101st heresy (depending on the edition). See *inter alios* Pedro Bádenas de la Peña, "El Islam como herejía en la obra de Juan Damasceno," in *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII*, ed. Miquel Barceló, Pedro Bádenas de la Peña and José Martínez Gázquez (Bellaterra: UAB Servei de Publicacions, 2005), 9–24.

⁸ See Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Muhammad's Portrait in Jiménez de Rada's *Historia Arabum* and in Marcos de Toledo's *Prologus Alcorani*: Two Different Examples of the Islamic-Christian Controversy Literature," in *Estudios de latín medieval hispánico. Actas del V Congreso internacional de latín medieval hispánico, Barcelona, 7–10 de septiembre de 2009*, ed. José Martínez Gázquez, Oscar de la Cruz Palma and Cándida Ferrero Hernández (Florence: Sismel, Galluzzo, 2011), 455–64; and the bibliography quoted therein, especially Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1960). Most recently see Cándida Ferrero Hernández and Óscar de la Cruz, eds., *Vitae Mahometi: Reescritura e invención en la literatura cristiana de controversia* (Madrid: CSIC, Nueva Roma, 2014).

the pious Christian ideals of chastity and turning the other cheek, it promotes violence, military conquest, and carnal pleasures.⁹

Beginning with the very first polemical treatises, Christian authors felt the need to document their claims with corroborative passages from the Qur’ān, and to this end they read and glossed the Qur’ān profusely.¹⁰ On the one hand, there was a widespread medieval and humanistic practice to gloss all that was read and copied. On the other hand, there were well-established conventions for how to refute the Muslim faith on the basis of Muslim doctrine. The confluence of these two important traditions resulted in unrelated manuscripts containing Qur’ānic translations with glosses in the same places as well as polemical treatises in which the same fragments of the Qur’ān were quoted. This trend will be evident throughout the texts presented here, both the glosses to Egidio da Viterbo’s Qur’ān and the polemical texts by the authors from Martín García’s circle. It can be argued that the Christian way of reading the Qur’ān was established in the Middle Ages and lasted *mutatis mutandis* until the early modern period, if not longer. It is precisely the grey area in the Christian assimilation of the Qur’ānic content and its interpretation that interest me here, especially since some of the intellectuals among the clergy decided to rely on persons of Muslim origin to help them hand-pick suitable Qur’ānic citations. The question to be raised is how the *conversos*’ mediation changed the Christian reception of the Qur’ān. In order to explore this phenomenon I will begin by presenting the corpus of Egidio da Viterbo’s glossed Qur’ān and subsequently proceed to compare it with other sources.

The Appeal of the Qur’ānic Gloss

The commissioner of Juan Gabriel’s translation, Egidio da Viterbo (1469–1532) is primarily known as a church scholar, Christian kabbalist, reformer of the Augustine order, and a philologist. His great interest in the Oriental languages led him to acquire manuscripts not only in Hebrew but also in Syriac, Aramaic, and Arabic, as well as to surround himself with language tutors and scholars.¹¹

⁹ See Thomas E. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 104ff.

¹⁰ On this subject, see especially Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History*; and Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur’ān in Latin Christendom 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

¹¹ On Egidio da Viterbo’s interest in Islam, see Katarzyna Starczewska, “Anti-Muslim Preaching in 16th-Century Spain and Egidio da Viterbo’s Research on Islam,” *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 51, no. 3 (2015): 413–30.

In 1518, Egidio was entrusted with a papal mission to Spain to meet with Emperor Charles V in order to ask him to join forces against the Turks.¹² He must have met Juan Gabriel during this visit and most probably decided to employ him as a translator, and maybe also as a tutor, due to the former *faqīh*'s knowledge of the Qur'ān.¹³ However, there is no evidence that Egidio—unlike the bishop of Barcelona, Martín García—was acquainted with the Qur'ān he commissioned to be translated. Moreover, the chances that the cardinal of Viterbo was actually skilled enough to read the Qur'ān in its original language are slim. Judging by his manuscripts related to Arabic learning, his level in this language was probably relatively basic and far from his mastery of Hebrew. The philological features of this Latin translation of the Qur'ān may have facilitated language acquisition, especially if the niceties of the Qur'ānic syntax were explained under the mentorship of a convert.¹⁴ Unfortunately, we do not know if this was the use Egidio envisioned for his translation or if he was guided by any other motivations in particular.

The information about how Egidio da Viterbo obtained his translated Qur'ān is scarce, but certain facts can be deduced from a seventeenth-century preface to the translation and corroborated with other sources. This three-folio prologue was written by David Colville (1581–1629), a Scottish scholar who copied the manuscript from the library of El Escorial in 1621 and brought it with him to Milan, where it remains to this day.¹⁵ Colville began his education in St. Andrews (1597), where he studied Greek, Hebrew, and the rudiments of Chaldean and Syriac. In 1606 he left for Avignon, where he began his

¹² Balbino Rano, "La Orden Augustiniana en la Península Ibérica durante los años 1500–1520," in *Egidio da Viterbo, O.S.A. e il suo tempo. Atti Del V Convegno Dell'Istituto Storico Agostiniano, Roma-Viterbo, 20–23 Ottobre 1982* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Augustinianum, 1983), 32.

¹³ García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic," 4.

¹⁴ On the characteristics of Egidio's Qur'ān, see Katarzyna Starczewska "*Sic erat scriptum, nec potui aliter legere*: Some Remarks on the Translation Process of Egidio da Viterbo's Qur'ān," *Medievalia* 16 (2013): 141–48; and Katarzyna Starczewska, "Critical Edition of Egidio da Viterbo's Latin Translation of the Qur'ān (1518): Some Methodological Problems," in *Estudiar el pasado: aspectos metodológicos de la investigación en Ciencias de la Antigüedad y de la Edad Media. Proceedings of the First Postgraduate Conference on Studies of Antiquity and Middle Ages, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 26–28th October 2010*, ed. A. Castro Correa et al. (Oxford: BAR, 2012), 353–59.

¹⁵ Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Latin Translation of the Qur'ān (1518/1621) Commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo: Critical Edition and Introductory Study," (PhD Diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2012), xxi–xxiii; and Katarzyna Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'ān (1518/1621). Commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo. Critical Edition and Case Study*, Diskurse der Arabistik 24, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018).

theological studies, completing them in Rome at The Scots College in 1608. Subsequently he went to Venice and Padua to study law and to Bologna to deepen his knowledge of medicine. Colville reached Spain in 1617 and was a librarian in El Escorial from 1617 to 1627.¹⁶ Among other things, he worked on the collections of Arabic manuscripts¹⁷ and served as a royal interpreter by appointment of Philip III and Philip IV of Spain. Furthermore, he was a professor of Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic in the college attached to the monastery.¹⁸ In 1628 he went to Turin as an interpreter of Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy, and in 1629, to Milan, arriving with a substantial number of manuscripts in Greek and Arabic copied at El Escorial together with his commentaries and translations. In Milan he was hosted by Cardinal Federico Borromeo.¹⁹

It is from Colville that we learn that Egidio's original manuscript was held at El Escorial and that, in it, the text was arranged in four columns, with the Latin translation side by side with the Arabic text. Furthermore, the prologue mentions that the first version of the translation was subsequently corrected and that it was completed with a column of glosses with which, however, the corrector was not in agreement. The person who corrected Juan Gabriel's version of the Latin Qur'ān was Egidio's godson, Leo Africanus.²⁰ For the purpose of this study I will not delve into Leo's corrections but concentrate instead on what I believe to be the first translator's contribution, in the hope that this approach will bring us closer to the Iberian context of production.

As mentioned above, Egidio's translation originated against a backdrop of religious hostility and anti-Muslim persecutions. David Colville, the aforementioned copyist of Egidio's Qur'ān, first claimed that he knew from particular traits of the translation that its author was "either Hispanic or Hispano-Italian by birth" and later specified that Juan Gabriel was Hispanic, from Zaragoza.²¹

¹⁶ John Durkan, "Three Manuscripts with Fife Associations, and David Colville of Fife," *The Innes Review* 20 (1969): 47–149, cited by Gianfranco Ravasi et al., *Storia dell'Ambrosiana: Il Seicento*, 4 vols. (Milan: Casa di Risparmio delle Province Lombarde, 1992–2002), 1:114.

¹⁷ Braulio Justel Calabozo, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial y sus manuscritos árabes. Sinopsis histórico-descriptiva* (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1978), 225; and Robert Jones, "Piracy, War and the Acquisition of Arabic Manuscripts in Renaissance Europe," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 2, nos. 96–110 (1987): 104.

¹⁸ D.M. Dunlop, "David Colville, a Successor of Michael Scot," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 28 (1951): 38–42, here at 39.

¹⁹ Ravasi, *Storia dell'Ambrosiana*, 1:114.

²⁰ See Natalie Z. Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 241–44.

²¹ Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'ān*; See also Starczewska, "Ex translatione satis cognoui quicumque is fuerat: fuisse natione Hispanum uel Hispano-Italum: Algunos rasgos de la traducción latina del Corán de 1518," in *Miscellanea Latina*, ed. María Teresa Muñoz

It is most probable that Juan Gabriel met Egidio when the cardinal was visiting Spain and translated the Qur'ān for him there.²² As reported in the prologue, Ioannes Gabriel Terrolensis copied the Qur'ān for the cardinal in Arabic, transcribed it into the Latin alphabet, and then translated it into Latin, in addition to glossing the text in adjacent columns.²³ Moreover, Figuerola explicitly stated in *Lumbre de fe* that by the time he was writing this work, Juan Gabriel was no longer near him and that he had taken some of his books with him.²⁴ Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that according to some glosses left by the copyist, David Colville, Juan Gabriel had only acted as the translator of the first volume, or the first book ("Liber Primus," equal to the first half of the first volume) of the Qur'ān.²⁵ Additionally, Juan Gabriel only calls himself a scribe.²⁶

As for the other convert, Juan Andrés, what is known about him comes mostly from the biographical information that the author inserted into the prologue to his work.²⁷ Juan Andrés, according to the introduction, had been a *faqīh* of the *aljama* of Xàtiva in Valencia and converted to Christianity in 1487. Subsequently, he became a preacher in Valencia and Granada, eventually

García de Iturrospe and Leticia Carrasco Reija (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios Latinos, UCM, 2015).

²² See García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic."

²³ "In fine prioris tomi dicitur quod Ioannes Gabriel Terrolensis descripserat tres primas columnas, putoque etiam authorem fuisse translationis, licet se scribam tantum uocet, qui ait se hoc descriptsisse in usum Fratris Aegidii Cardinalis et legati Pontificis anno 1518 Viterpii." Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'ān*, 5, English translation, XXVIII.

In the end of the first volume it is said that Ioannes Gabriel Terrolensis had copied the first three columns, and I think that he was also the author of the translation, although he only calls himself a scribe. He says that he had copied it for the use of Brother Egidio, the cardinal and Papal legate in 1518 in Viterbo.

²⁴ García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic," 419–20.

²⁵ Egidio da Viterbo's Qur'ān reflects almost exactly the Maghrebi division of the Qur'ān into four parts. The difference lies in the cut-off point between the third and fourth parts: in the Maghrebi tradition the *suwar* are grouped 1–6, 7–18, 19–35, and 36–114, while in the *M* manuscript, chapters 1–6 form the first book, 7–18 the second book, 19–37 the third book, and 38–114 the fourth. On this division into four parts, see also Hartmut Bobzin, "Bemerkungen zu Juan Andrés und zu seinem Buch *Confusion dela secta mahomatica* (Valencia 1515)," in *Festgabe für Hans-Rudolf Singer: zum 65. Geburtstag am 6. April 1990*, ed. Martin Forstner (Frankfurt, Main: P. Lang, 1991), 529–48, and its Spanish translation: Hartmut Bobzin, "Observaciones sobre Juan Andrés y su libro *Confusion dela secta mahomatica* (Valencia 1515)," in Ferrero and De la Cruz, *Vitae Mahometi*, 209–22, esp. 216–22.

²⁶ "licet se scribam tantum uocet"; see n. 23.

²⁷ Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 89–92.

rising to the position of canon.²⁸ He recorded in his treatise that in 1510 he had translated the whole of the Qur'ān into the Romance (Aragonese) vernacular at the request of Martín García, and that the bishop had used this translation in his sermons.²⁹ Juan Andrés's translation has been lost, though in his *Confusión* he included about 140 Qur'ānic quotations transcribed and translated into Spanish, with textual comments.³⁰ It has been argued that, even when Juan Andrés is attacking the Qur'ān, he relies heavily on the Islamic tradition;³¹ this Islamic awareness becomes particularly noticeable when the author of the *Confusión o confutación* quotes the various glosses. Juan Andrés mentions *la glosa* and *los glosadores* about twelve times in his treatise, and he grants the *glosadores* the authority of the traditional exegetes of Islam.³² Similarly, when Juan Andrés claims to have translated the Qur'ān for Don Martín García, he says that he translated the Qur'ān and its glosses, *Alcorán con sus glosas*, which is exactly what Egidio da Viterbo got from his journey to Spain: the translation of the Qur'ān together with some glosses that were meant to explicate and contextualize the translation.

Therefore, we can see that the two converts, Juan Andrés and Juan Gabriel, well educated in their former religion as *fuqahā'* typically were, were active in the territory of Aragón and collaborated with members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, providing them with some notion of the Muslim tradition and with Qur'ānic quotations. Some of the materials that both the Juans authored are similar enough to indicate, at the very least, a common source, or sources, of inspiration. Such is the case with the Qur'ānic interpretations of: 1) prescriptions concerning wine drinking,³³ 2) the size of Paradise,³⁴ 3) polygamy,³⁵ 4) dishonest tutors in Hell,³⁶ 5) those who die in battle,³⁷ and 6) temptation by

²⁸ Gerard A. Wiegers identifies Juan Andrés as the canon in his article "Moriscos and Arabic Studies in Europe," *Al-Qantara* 31, no. 2 (2010): 587–610, esp. 589. See also Rafael Marín López, *El Cabildo de la Catedral de Granada en el siglo XVI* (Granada: Universidad, 1998), 438.

²⁹ Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 91.

³⁰ Bobzin, "Observaciones sobre Juan Andrés," 209–22.

³¹ Ryan Szpeich, "Preaching Paul to the Moriscos in the *Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán* (1515) by Juan Andrés," *La Corónica* 41.1 (2012): 317–43.

³² Cf. e.g. "Dizen los glosadores y Mahoma en la Suna ..." Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 190; or "El qual testo o verso o dicho está muy desonesto por sí y muy superfluo, pero los glosadores del Alcorán lo esposieron y lo escusaron," Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 201.

33 Juan Andrés: Así mesmo dice el Alcorán, libro segundo, capítulo onzeno, [16:67. Mistakenly, Juan Andrés makes reference to chap. 11 instead of the 10] donde describe que el vino es lícito (...).

Juan Gabriel: Pro uersu 215 (2:219) de uino: Dicunt quod in Alcorano non erat prohibitus usus uini ut patet ex his locis, lib[er] 1 cap[itulo] 10 uers. 67 [Should be: "liber 2 capitulo 10 uers. 67," 16:67: "Et ex arboribus, et ex palmis, et ex uuis, accipiunt ex eo ebrietatem et nutrimentum bonum; et in hoc sunt miracula pro gentibus quae sunt prudentes."], ubi iubet eis facere uinum ex uuis.

See also Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 198, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 371–73.

34 Juan Andrés: Pues dime tú, moro, dónde está este Paradiso, si es tant grande como todo el mundo, o avemos de dezir que Dios crió otro mundo sin éste en el qual está este Paradiso, el qual dicho está harto confuso. (Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 188).

Juan Gabriel: Pro uersu 133 (3:133): Dicunt quod corascitae obiiciebant Machomae si paradisus est aequalis magnitudine caelo et terrae, quid fit de inferno et ubi erant.

35 Juan Andrés: la quarta ley que hizo Mahoma para sí especial fue en la yguala entre las mugeres, car que ay entre los moros que qualquiere moro que tiene dos o tres o cuatro mugeres juntamente deve de tener orden por ygual entre sus mugeres, así en el vestir y governar como en el dormir. Y si no lo fiziera, las mugeres que se fallassen agraviadas puédenlo convenir y amplazar delante del juez, salvo Mahoma que no fue obligado a esta ley ni se entendía para él (...). (Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 168).

Juan Gabriel: Pro 125 (4:127): Dicit quod mauri qui habent multas uxores debent dare operam ut non magis faueat uni quam alteri, et si una placeat magis quam altera tum potest facere diuortium cum illa; sed dicit Abnat quod Machom fuit exceptus ab hac lege, quia in lib[er] 3, cap[ut] 1 (Q19?) dicit quod Deus dispensauit cum Machom ut dormiret cum qua uellet uxore.

36 Juan Andrés: Y dize que veeron muchos hombres que no fazían sino bever plomo dirráido y hinchían sus vientres, y despues reventavan por sus vientres y salía todo lo que avían bivido, y tornaban otra vez a bever y así fazían siempre, por los quales preguntó Mahoma al ángel qué gente era aquella. Y dixo que aquéllos eran los que comían y gastaban los bienes de los popiles en este mundo. (Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 183).

Juan Gabriel: Pro uersu 10 (4:10): Dicunt quod Machom uiderat in somnis quosdam comedentes prunas in infernis et petierat a Gabriele quinam illi erant, respondit Gabriel eos esse tutores qui comederant in terris bona pupillorum suorum. [This gloss make no explicit mention of the Night Journey, but a marginal annotation next to Q17 *Banī Isrā'īl* (or *Sūrat al-isrā'*) states, "in alio codice titulus erat بني إسرائيل 'Filii Israel.' Vtrumque habet habet fundamentum, primum ex uersu 1º, alterum ex uersu eodem 5º, et cum interpretatur per 'insomnium,' puto eum decipi eum solum, significat 'transitum a templo Mecha ad templum Hierusalem,' heb. נטה [?] / נסה [?]." In the other codex the title was بني إسرائيل "The Sons of Israel." They are both well grounded, the first one from the 1st verse, the other one from the 5th one, and since it is translated as "insomnium," I think that he was wrong, it means "the passage from the temple of Mecha to the temple of Jerusalem," in Hebrew נטה [?] / נסה [?].]

37 Juan Andrés: Así mesmo promete el *Alcorán* que los moros que mueren en la pelea que no son muertos, antes díze que son bivos, los quales comen y beven. Esto lo dice capítulo

the Devil.³⁸ What is striking about these coincidences is that the polemical potential of some of these fragments is not obvious at first glance. Of course, the information they convey could be skillfully inserted into an anti-Muslim sermon and in fact was, as Martín García's and Figuerola's preaching attests.³⁹ But the converts themselves prefer to use a factual tone in their compilation and leave the derogatory commentary aside.

When the medieval Christian author al-Kindī attempted to convince his Muslim correspondent to change his faith, he justified the use of Qur'ānic quotations as follows: "Truly, I am not telling you anything you do not know, I am just reminding you what you know already."⁴⁰ In other words, from the Christian perspective, Muslims already knew, or would have known had they read their Scriptures carefully, that their religion was a fraud and that for the salvation of their souls they needed to convert to Christianity. The sixteenth-century Qur'ānic awareness seems to be more nuanced than this; there is some visible interest in showing the less objectionable side of the Islamic creed, maybe even a side that could potentially appeal to a Christian audience. Additionally, in the case of authors from Martín García's circle, some philosophical tools were employed in order to unleash the full potential of an incisive

primero, libro primero (2:154) y capítulo segundo, libro primero (3:169).... (Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 225).

Juan Gabriel: Pro uersu 150 (2:154): Dicunt quod Machom. asseuerauit sancte mauris quod illi qui moriuntur in bello, non reuera interficuntur sed uidetur tantum, et edunt et comedunt cum Deo.

38 Juan Andrés: Así mesmo dice en los susodichos capítulos cómo el diablo dixo a Dios que siempre sería enemigo mortal de los hombres y que siempre avía de tentar a los hombres y de atormentarlos, así mismo dice *Alcorán* en muchas partes y ammonesta a los hombres deziendo que el diablo es enemigo manifesto del hombre [Cf. Egidio's Qur'ān: "et nolite sequi uestigia diaboli, qui est inimicus uester manifestus" (2:168), "non sequimini uestigia Diaboli, qui est uobis inimicus manifestus" (2:208), "non sequamini uestigia diaboli, quia ille est uobis inimicus manifestus" (6:142), "Et quod demon fuerit uobis inimicus manifestus" (7:22), "quia diabolus pro persona est inimicus manifestus" (12:5), etc.], las cuales cosas son muy manifiestas en l'*Alcorán*. (Juan Andrés, *Confusión*, 195).

Juan Gabriel: (38:82): d[ixerunt] Ab. et Az. quod omnes qui nati sunt, tentati fuerunt a diabolo; et sic dixit: "Ego tentabo omnes."

39 See Teresa Soto and Katarzyna Starczewska, "Authority, Philology and Conversion under the Aegis of Martín García," in *After conversion. Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

40 In the Latin translation: "Ego prorsus nichil profero quod ignores, sed quod scis reminisci te facio." Fernando González Muñoz, ed., *Exposición y refutación del Islam. La versión latina de las epístolas de al-Hasimi y al-Kindi* (A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, Servizo de Publicacións, 2005), 114.

reading of the Qur'ān: direct quotation contextualized in relation to the Muslim sources, Qur'ānic verses referenced according to the Maghrebian division in four books,⁴¹ widespread in the Iberian Peninsula in that time,⁴² the text of the Qur'ān not only translated but also transcribed in Arabic; the transliteration of the Arabic original; and a clear division between the Qur'ān and its exegesis, called sometimes "the gloss." Thus, one might surmise the existence of a compilation of suitable material prepared by someone with a strong Muslim background (Juan Andrés or Juan Gabriel, maybe based on some preexisting sources), which was used by Juan Andrés, Martín García, and Figuerola.

The glosses in the Italian corpus commissioned by Egidio shed light on the multi-faceted religious battles that were raging at the time in Iberia. These annotations, scribbled on folios smaller than the actual translation, are found in only one of the extant manuscripts of the 1518/1621 translation of the Qur'ān.⁴³ In the preface to this translation, Colville, the copyist of the Qur'ān and its glosses, says: "The fourth [column] contained some annotations of one Gabriel ... Those corrections and annotations were edited by Leo from Granada."⁴⁴ The phrase "and annotations" was crossed out in the manuscript, which may indicate that the copyist was not sure to whom the glosses should be attributed, the original translator, Juan Gabriel, or the corrector who subsequently worked on the text, Leo Africanus. Further along in the prologue we read about a letter that Leo Africanus wrote to Egidio da Viterbo, a part of which is quoted:

"May Your Reverence erase the things which are annotated in the margin (he understood the glosses in the beginning). Because they do not go with the text due to the first translator's lack of erudition." And later on he promised that in some time he would edit a work for its understanding.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Cf. Margarita Castells Criballés, "Alguns aspectes formals de la traducció llatina de l'Alcorà de Robert de Ketton (c. 1141–1143) i la seva relació amb el text original àrab," *Faventia* 29, no. 3 (2007): 79–106.

⁴² Cf. Consuelo López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo: Edición y estudio del manuscrito 235 de la Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha* (Gijón: Trea, 2011), 39–40.

⁴³ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS D 100, quoted below as *M*.

⁴⁴ "Quarta continebat annotationes quasdam Gabrielis cuiusdam ... Correctiones autem illas [et annotationes *deleuit M*] edidit Ioannes Leo Granatinus;" Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'ān*, 5.

⁴⁵ "Deleat D.V. Rma. ea quea in margine notata (intelligit glossas illas in principio). Quoniam aliqua textui non conueniunt propter primi scriptoris traductoris ineruditonem." Et in caeteris promittit se aliquando editurum opus aliquod pro intelligentia illius. Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'ān*, 6.

This brief fragment indicates that it was not Leo Africanus who compiled the glosses but his Aragonese predecessor, Juan Gabriel, and certain similarities with Juan Andrés's quotations corroborate this. As for the glosses' arrangement, they are organized in such a way that they make reference to the text of the Qur'an sura by sura, *āya* by *āya*. The annotations refer mainly to the second and the third sura, although there are also numerous references to *suwar* 4 and 5 and fewer glosses concerning *suwar* 1, 6, 22, 26, 38, 39, and 89. In Colville's words:

These glosses were missing in many places, here they start anew in book 4, although they will last very little; and I write them with a very willing spirit, because in many suras already covered I had doubts, because I did not understand, I suspected that they concealed some mystery; here I had doubts in the same way and I read this commentary, which explained what I did not understand. And I enjoyed the fact that I did not understand these things because they were not intelligible, and I never transcribed anything with greater pleasure than these glosses, with the help of which I understood those things that I was not understanding before and began to comprehend when I was thinking I was not comprehending.⁴⁶

Colville's appraisal of the glosses has to be taken with a grain of salt. Although the copyist painstakingly transcribes everything, including the content which he does not understand, he occasionally gives vent to his frustration. He asserts, for instance, "I faithfully copied all this word for word, if someone does not understand it, may they not blame the scribe,"⁴⁷ or he complains, "all these quotations were false,"⁴⁸ or exclaims "Who can understand that!"⁴⁹ Therefore, when Colville calls the notes beautiful,⁵⁰ I am inclined to believe that he is

46 Glossae istae iam per multa stadia defecere, hic iterum incipiunt in lib[ro] 4, sed parum duratura; et libertissimo animo eas scribo, quia in multis azoaris iam praeteritis haeretbam, cum non intelligebam, suspicabar latere aliquid mysterii; hic eodem modo haesitabam et legi commentarium istum, qui illa explicabat quae non intelligebam. Et laetabar me non intellexisse ea quia non erant intelligibilia, et numquam quidpiam transcripsi maiori gusto quam glossas istas, quibus intellexi me, quae non intelligebam, intelligere et uere sapere cum putabam me non sapere. Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'an*, 805; English translation, LXXV.

47 Haec omnia ad uerbum et fideliter transtuli ne, si non intelligent, scriptori imponant uitium (38:21–22).

48 Omnes istae citationes erant falsae (38:71).

49 Quis haec intelligat! (39:7).

50 pulchrae istae glossae (39:19).

being sarcastic. The high esteem in which he held his own knowledge of Arabic and the informal character of the annotations could account for the particular sense of humor Colville displays while copying the glosses.

The glosses excerpted from Egidio's corpus can in fact be laconic and enigmatic, so the thematic arrangement which I suggest does not necessarily have to be viewed as conclusive. Moreover, there is no satisfactory guarantee that the preserved corpus features all the original glosses Juan Gabriel added to Egidio's Qur'ān. Despite these reservations, let us proceed with a tentative labeling of the annotations according to the themes they deal with:

TABLE 9.1 *Subject of the gloss and reference within the Qur'ān–sura:āya*

Subject of the gloss	Reference within the Qur'ān
The Division and the Names of the Qur'ān	Alforcan and Alcoran (2:53) The Types of Qur'ānic Verses (3:7) The Division of the Qur'ān (between sura 18 and 19) Against Those Who Complained that the Qur'ān Is Separated (6:7) <i>historiae antiquae</i> (22:3) The Admonition (38:53) The Descent of the Qur'ān (39:1)
Names of the Suwar	Sura al-Baqarah (Q2, 2:67–68) Number of Verses in Sura 2 (2:286) Sura Al Imran (3:1) Sura An-Nisa (Q4) Sura Al-Ma'ida (Q5) Sura Al-An'am (Q6) Sura Al-Hajj (Q22) Sura Ash-Shu'ara (Q26) Sura Sad (Q38) Sura Az-Zumar (Q39) Sura al-Fajr (Q89)

Subject of the gloss	Reference within the Qur'ān
The Inimitability of the Qur'ān	Musaylimah (2:23, 6:93)
The Oneness of God (<i>Tawhid</i>)	Eleazar or Ezra as God's Son (2:116, 3:64) God's Son (39:4)
The Abrogation of Revelations	Stoning (<i>Rajm</i>) (2:106, 4:15, 4:16) Penitence (4:17–18)
The Initial Letters	2:1
	26:1
	38:1
Muslim Rites and Prayers	The Five Daily Prayers (1:1–7) “Baptism” (<i>ṣibga</i>) (2:138) Hajj and Umrah (2:196) Prayers Other Than the Salat (3:191–94) The Three Prayers (3:191–94 ?) The Salutations (4:86) Prayer during the Battle (4:101) Votive Offerings (5:2)
The Wine	(2:219)
	Wine and Purification before Prayers (4:43)
Qibla	The Direction of the Prayers (2:115) The Change of the Direction of the Prayers (2:141, 6:90) God's Reply to the Change of the Qibla (2:144)
Mecca	Those Who Flee to Mecca Are Safe from Hell Fire (2:126) Al-Safa and Al-Marwah (2:158) The Black Stone of Kaaba (5:97) The Mother of the Cities (6:92)

TABLE 9.1 *Subject of the gloss and reference within the Qur'ān–sura:āya (cont.)*

Subject of the gloss	Reference within the Qur'ān
The Battles in the Early Days of Islam	<p>The Battles of Badr (March 13, 624/17 Ramadan 2) and Uhud (March 19, 625/3 Shawwal 3) (3:13)</p> <p>Angels Fighting in the Battle (3:123)</p> <p>The Vulnerability of Muḥammad (who was injured in the face during the Battle of Uhud) (3:128, 3:144, 3:176)</p> <p>The Loss of the Battle of Uhud to the Jews (3:139)</p> <p>Low Spirits after the Battle of Uhud (3:143)</p> <p>Flight from the Battle (3:144, 3:145)</p> <p>The Discord between the Moors after Winning the Battle of Badr (3:152)</p> <p>The Devil in the Battle of Uhud (3:153)</p> <p>Against Refraining from the Battle (3:156)</p> <p>Spoils (3:161)</p> <p>God's Consolation after the Battle of Uhud (3:165)</p> <p>Against Those Who Did Not Fight in the Battle of Uhud (3:167)</p> <p>Those Who Stayed at Home vs. Those Who Fought in the Battle of Badr (4:95)</p> <p>Muḥammad's Injuries in the Battle of Badr (4:104)</p> <p>Beni Almozta Lech [?] (22:2)</p>
Fighting in the Name of the Prophet/Islam/God	<p>Those Who Die in Battle Are Not Dead but Feast with God (2:154)</p> <p>The Obligation to Fight (2:216)</p> <p>The Resurrected Soldiers (2:243)</p> <p>Against Staying at Home in Order Not to Be Killed in a Battle (3:154)</p> <p>Those who Die in Battle Want to Return from Paradise and Die Again (3:169)</p>

Subject of the gloss	Reference within the Qur'ān
The Jews and the Relations with Them	<p>The Covenant (2:40)</p> <p>How the Jews Were Turned into Monkeys (2:65)</p> <p>Rahine (<i>Rā'iñā</i>) (2:104, 4:46)</p> <p>Abdullah ibn Salam and His Conversion to Islam (2:146)</p> <p>The Controversy with the Jews Regarding Abraham (3:23)</p> <p>The Length of Jewish Punishment in Hell (3:24)</p> <p>Muslim Conquest after Muḥammad's Death (3:26)</p> <p>Fictitious Conversion of Twelve Jews (3:72)</p> <p>Some Jews Briefly Confirmed That Muḥammad Was Mentioned in the Torah (3:78)</p> <p>Jews Said They Were Rich and God Was Poor (3:181)</p> <p>Jews Asked for a Prophet/Apostle (3:183)</p> <p>Two Jewish Idolaters (4:51–52)</p> <p>The Appellant (4:59)</p> <p>Muḥammad's Discussion with Two Rabbis (4:153)</p> <p>The Jew Who Converted to Islam and Saw Muḥammad in the Scriptures (6:20)</p>
The Christians and Relations with Them	<p>Jews and Christians Mentioned in Al-Fatiha (1:7)</p> <p>The Gospel (3:184)</p> <p>Only Good Deeds Guarantee Paradise (4:123–24)</p> <p>82 Christians Who Converted to Islam (5:83–84)</p> <p>Ten Moors Who Wanted to Copy a Hermit (5:87–88)</p> <p>Contradicting Christian Witnesses (5:107)</p>

TABLE 9.1 *Subject of the gloss and reference within the Qur'ān–sura:āya (cont.)*

Subject of the gloss	Reference within the Qur'ān
The Quraysh and Relations with Them	<p>Renegades and Apostates (2:6)</p> <p>Controversy about the Composition of the Qur'an (3:7)</p> <p>The Size of Paradise (3:133)</p> <p>Dissuading the Quraysh from Fighting (3:173)</p> <p>Fighting the Quraysh vs. Praying (4:77)</p> <p>Idolaters Invoke Demons with Feminine Names (4:117)</p> <p>Two Who Were Unhappy with Muhammad's Judgement (5:50)</p> <p>Names of the Idols (5:101–3)</p> <p>Quraysh Give Offerings before Battles (6:136)</p> <p>Muhammad Should Not Worry about the Quraysh (26:3)</p> <p>God Speaking about the Quraysh (26:5, 39:7)</p> <p>Quraysh and Miracles (26:7)</p> <p>Destruction of the Previous Generations (38:3)</p> <p>The Quraysh Say that Muhammad was a Sorcerous Liar (38:4)</p> <p>The One God (38:5)</p> <p>25 Quraysh Nobles (38:6)</p> <p>Against the Gods of the Quraysh (38:11)</p> <p>Punishment of the Quraysh (38:15, 38:16)</p> <p>The Fourth Caliph (38:28)</p>
Hell	<p>The Punishment in Hell for the Quraysh and Sinners (38:55)</p> <p>What Is Said upon Entering Hell (38:61)</p> <p>What the Quraysh Say in Hell (38:62)</p> <p>Those Who Lost Their Souls in This World (39:16)</p> <p>Muhammad Cannot Save Those Who Were Predestined to Hell Fire (39:19)</p>

Subject of the gloss	Reference within the Qur'ān
The Hypocrites	(2:204) Those Who Believed in Muhammad But Did Not Follow Him to Medina (4:97)
The Apostates	(3:86) Presumed Idolaters (4:89) False Friends (4:91)
The Talkers	4:83
The Envoy	4:90
On Killing the Infidel Who Proclaimed <i>Shahada</i>	4:94
Those Who Abandoned Idolatry	39:17

TABLE 9.2 *The Muslim prophets found in the Old and New Testaments*

Adam	The Expulsion from Paradise (2:31, 2:34, 2:35, 2:36, 2:38) Adam and Eve Meeting on Mount Arafat (2:198) The Comparison of Adam's and Jesus's Creation (3:59)
Noah	Against Those Who Lied to the Prophets (38:12)
Abraham	Abraham and Ismael Constructed Kaaba (2:125) The Prayer of Abraham (2:127–28) Abraham Was a Muslim (2:140, 3:68, 4:125) Abraham and the King Who Converted (2:258) The Resurrection of the Birds (2:260) Controversy with the Jews (3:23) Abraham Was Neither a Jew Nor a Christian (3:67) The Birth of Abraham (6:75) Abraham and Other Servants of God (38:45)
Moses	The Seventy Elders (2:55) The Twelve Springs (2:60) Moses and the Prophets of the Old and New Testaments (3:199) The Story of Moses (26:10)

TABLE 9.2 *The Muslim prophets found in the old and new testaments (cont.)*

Mary	The Beginning of the Story of Imran (3:33) The Excellence of Mary (3:36) The Etymology of her name (3:36) Fed by an Angel (3:36, 3:37–39) Free from the Temptation of the Devil (3:36) The Sanctity of Mary (3:37–39) Mary in the Temple (3:44–45) The Venerability of Mary and Christ (3:55) Mary and Her Son Were Never Tempted by the Devil (38:83)
Jesus	The Names of Jesus (3:44–45, 3:60) The Talking of Baby Jesus (3:46) The Childhood of Jesus (3:48–50) Controversy with the Christians (3:51, 3:61) The Apostles (3:52) The Resurrection of Christ (3:55) The Punishment of Those Who Did Not Believe in Jesus (3:56) The Prophets Are Not to Be Worshipped (3:80) Christ Did Not Die on the Cross (4:157)
David	Gideon, Taluth, David, Saul (2:246–49) David and the Philistine (2:250–51) Angels as the Two Litigants (38:21–22, 38:22, 38:23) Forgiveness of David's Sins (38:25) King David (38:26)
Solomon	Slaying Horses (38:30–33) Solomon's Ring (38:34) Solomon's Power and Kingdom (38:36, 38:37)
Job	Job's Sufferings (38:41) 100 Lashes (38:44)
Eleazar or Ezra	The Son of God (2:116) The Parable of the Hamlet in Ruins (2:259)
John the son of Zacharias	3:37–39
Nebuchadnezzar	(2:114) Nebuchadnezzar and Ezra (2:259)

Muhammad	Does Not Perform Miracles (2:118) His Parents in Hell (2:119) Muhammad Prefigured in the Scriptures (2:121, 3:70) Prophet from Mecca (2:129) His Name Deleted from the Scriptures (2:140, 3:78) The Ancient Prophets Believed in Muhammad (3:81) God Reprehends Muhammad for Fleeing (3:159) Muhammad's Paternal Uncles (6:66?) Controversy about the Revelation of the Qur'an (38:8, 38:9) The Admonisher (38:65) Prophet (38:69) Muhammad Did Not Ask for Remuneration (38:86–87) Muhammad or Abraham Is the First Moor (39:11) An Admonition to Muhammad (39:13)
The Imperative to Believe in Muhammad	The Muslims Believe in Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, Jews and Christians Should Believe in Muhammad (2:136) Corruption of the Scriptures (3:199)
The Son of the First Caliph: Abdul-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr [?]	6:71 ^a
Angels	Harut and Marut (2:102) The Vigilant Angels (6:61) Creation of Man from Mud (38:71)
Devil	(4:118–21) Temptation by the Devil (38:82)
Animals	Resurrection of Animals on Judgment Day (6:38)
Cosmology	Creation of Earth and Heavens (2:29, 39:5)
Arabic Months	Muḥarram, Rajab, Ramaḍān, Dhu al-Qa'dah, Months in Which It Was Forbidden to Fight (2:194) Dhū al-Hijja: the Pilgrimage Month (2:194) Numbered Days (2:203) Ramadan (6:90)

^a This rather mysterious gloss states: “Versu 71 [6:71]: Iste uersus descendit causa filii Vbequar [Abu Bakr?] primi alicalif qui postquam conuersus est ad Machomam una cum patre semper adhortabatur patrem ut relinqueret fedem Machom.” This verse descended because of the son of Vbequar, the first caliph, who after he converted to Machomam together with his father, always urged his father to abandon Machom's faith.

TABLE 9.3 *Laws prescribed in the Qur'ān*

Laws Prescribed in the Qur'ān	General	Usury (2:276)
		Friendship with the Infidels (3:28)
		Obligations of Orphans' Tutors (4:5)
		Dishonest Tutors in Hell (4:10)
		Punishment for Homicide (4:92)
	Food Prescriptions	Reselling a Robbed Breastplate (4:106–8)
		5:1, Q6
		The Voluntary Charities (2:215)
	Charity	Alms (2:224)
	Marriage	Christian and Jewish Wives (2:221)
		The Permission for the Widows to Remarry (4:19)
		The Material Requisites for Remarrying (4:20)
		Prohibited and Permitted Women (4:24, 4:28)
		Marriage with Christian Women (4:25)
		Women Should Not Complain (4:32)
		Marital Scandals (4:36)
		Polygamy (4:127)
		Inheritance (4:7–9)
		The Division of Inheritance (4:11)
		Division of Inheritance between Spouses and Siblings (4:12)

These clusters of glosses show that annotations that are openly anti-Muslim or anti-Christian are absent from the corpus. As for the anti-Christian themes, the denial of the divinity of Christ can be regarded as the most controversial. On the other hand, this claim is counterbalanced by numerous phrases referring to the venerability of Jesus, for instance:

And so our glossator says that Christ and Mary are worshipped by the Moors to such a degree that when they speak about them, they always add these honorable titles: عليه السلام [“our lord”] they call him, سيدنا [“peace be upon him”], which means “our lord, peace be upon him.” And they call Virgin Mary سيدتنا [“our lady”] “Cesina,” which is “our lady,” and

like this: مريم رضي الله عنها [“Mary, God bless her”] “Mariene aradia allahu lanche.”⁵¹

From the anti-Muslim perspective, certain annotations criticize the Prophet, yet much of this criticism is placed in the mouths of the Quraysh, for example:

Regarding verse 116 [2:118]: The interpreters say that the Quraysh asked Machom to perform miracles like Moses and other of God's messengers, but he replied that those who ask God's messengers to perform miracles act wickedly, and it is expressly said in the sunnah that Machom forbade it expressly, and the same is said in āya 107.⁵²

Interestingly, one finds references to *Tahrij*, the alteration of the Scriptures, for instance in the statement that the Muslims believed in the Old and the New Testaments in the times of Muḥammad, but since then these Scriptures have been tainted:

Regarding verse 199: The interpreters say (says our glossator) that the Moors often acknowledged that those who believed in the books of Moses, in the remaining Old Testament, and in the Gospel, will prosper in the life to come; and that in Machom's time all those [Scriptures] were uncorrupted but now they are very corrupted.⁵³

⁵¹ Ideoque, inquit glossator noster, quod Christus et Maria sunt tantae uenerationis apud mauros ut cum de eis loquuntur, addunt semper titulos illos honoratos سيدنا alii appellant eum, عليه السلام id est “dominus noster, super illum pax.” Et Mariam Virginem uocant Cesina, id est “domina nos[tra],” et hoc modo مريم رضي الله عنها سيدتنا “Mariene aradia allahu lanche.” On this fragment, see Starczewska, “Anti-Muslim Preaching.”

⁵² Pro uersu 116 [2:118]: Dicunt interpres quod Coraxiae petierunt a Machom ut faceret miracula, sicut Moyses et alii nuncii Dei, ille autem respondit quod illi prae fecerunt qui petunt miracula a nunciis Dei, et hoc expresse dicitur in sunna quod Machom hoc uetus expresse, et idem dicit in alea 107 [Probable reference to 2:108].

⁵³ Pro uersu 199 [3:199]: Dicunt interpres (inquit glossator noster) quod mauri saepe profitentur quod qui crediderint in libros Moysis, in uetus testamentum reliquum et in euangelium, satiabuntur in sequenti uita; et quod tempore Machomae omnia ista erunt incorrupta, nunc uero sunt corruptissima.

A less balanced stance seems to be taken towards the Jews,⁵⁴ and the Quraysh, hypocrites, and idolaters are unequivocally depicted in a bad light.⁵⁵

As we can see from the inventory presented above, the overlap with topics addressed in medieval anti-Islamic writing is not necessarily the most salient feature. Undoubtedly, there are many points of convergence, such as making reference to Jews and Christians mentioned in Al-Fatiha,⁵⁶ or the topics concerning Muhammad not performing miracles and his appearance being foretold in the Scriptures. For medieval Christian authors, the controversy around the miracles of the Prophet attested to his "Pseudoprophecy."⁵⁷ Remarkably, although the information conveyed in the glosses might be the same as what one would find in medieval sources, in Egidio's corpus it is deprived of polemical value and stated in a purely informative tone.

Broadly speaking, the emphasis of the glosses from Egidio's corpus seems to be on exploring the points of convergence between Christianity and Islam, but not from the medieval perspective of error. Intuitively, it appears that Juan Gabriel is interested in blurring the borders between Christianity and Islam, devoting much of his attention to Biblical figures and stressing their relevance in the Qur'ān. The informal character of Juan Gabriel's glosses gave the author an advantage Juan Andrés did not have. Although it cannot be argued that Juan Gabriel could speak his mind freely while glossing the Qur'ān, he certainly was not forced to process his material in the polemical vein. For some reason, the convert thought it was beneficial for his Christian patron to focus his attention on the appearance in the Muslim book of figures that were familiar to him from the Bible. In accordance with Juan Gabriel's wish, then, let us scrutinize how this particular Qur'ānic interpretation characterizes one of the Patriarchs.

54 E.g. "Pro uersu 62 [2:65]: Dicunt interpres quod quidem iudei cuiusdam urbis quia piscati sunt in sabbato, conuersi fuerint in simias. De quibus, inquit glossa, uerba facit in 2. Lib[ro], cap[itulo] 1, uers. 160, 161, 163 [7:165–67?], item lib[er] 1, cap[ut] 4, num. 63 [5:60?]."

Regarding verse 62: the interpreters say that indeed the Jews of a certain city were turned into monkeys because they were fishing on the Sabbath. Those, as the gloss says, are mentioned in book 2, chapter 1, verses 160, 161, 163, also book 1, chapter 4, number 63.

55 E.g. "[38:15] ... pro Coraxistis; minando eis et dicendo quod non exspectant nisi unam poenam quae statim ueniet super eos absque misericordia."

To the Quraysh, threatening them and saying not to expect anything other than a punishment which will soon come upon them without mercy.

56 Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, 70, 158, 174–75.

57 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 89–99.

Calling Abraham's Identity into Question

In Figuerola's *Lumbre de Fe*, Abraham is presented as follows: "no fue Abraham judío ni cristiano mas fue verdadero moro y no fue de blasfemadores."⁵⁸ In the glosses in Egidio da Viterbo's Latin Qur'ān we find similar wording (once we are able to distinguish between the original text and the copyist's commentary):

[They say] of this beautiful discussion whether Abraham was a Jew, a Christian or a Moor, it is beautiful to read his stupidity. Finally he concludes that neither Jews nor Christians should dispute if Abraham was theirs, because no one admonishes but the only God.⁵⁹

The glosser made this very elegant syllogism out of this verse in order to confirm his claim that Abraham was a Moor; those who followed Abraham followed his law, and the law of Muhammad is the law of Abraham, therefore Abraham was a Moor and so was Muhammad.⁶⁰

It is well known that the identity of Abraham was frequently debated in the Middle Ages.⁶¹ In this text, one can perceive a certain uneasiness over translating the Qur'ānic phrase كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (3:67) into Latin. The medieval Latin translations of the Qur'ān that were produced in the Iberian Peninsula were widely circulated and thus shaped anti-Muslim polemical literature even beyond Iberia. This is especially the case of the first translation, produced by Robert of Ketton (1142–43).⁶² This translation exists thanks to the initiative of the Abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable (1092/94–1156), who

⁵⁸ García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic."

⁵⁹ Pro uersu 66 (3:67): [Dicunt quod] de disputatione illa pulchra utrum Abraham fuerit iudeus, christianus an maurus, pulchrum est legere stultitiam illius. Tandem concludit quod neque iudei neque christiani debent contendere Abraham fuisse ex suis quia nemo admonit nisi solus Deus.

⁶⁰ Pro uersu 67 (3:68): Ex hoc uersu glossator facit hunc syllogismum elegantissimum pro confirmatione illius quod Abraham fuit maurus; qui secuti sunt Abraham, secuti sunt legem illius et lex Machomae est lex Abrahæ, ergo Abraham erat maurus sicut erat Machoma.

⁶¹ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 42–43.

⁶² See, among others, José Martínez Gázquez, "Finalidad de la primera traducción latina del Corán," in *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII*, ed. Miquel Barceló and José Martínez Gázquez (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2005), 71–77; and, on Mark of Toledo's translation: Thomas E. Burman, "How an Italian Friar Read his Arabic Qur'an," *Dante Studies* 125 (2007): 93–109.

in the course of his trip to the north of the Iberian Peninsula took an opportunity to compile first-hand material that would allow him to refute Islam. His plan to discredit his opponent's religion consisted of developing objectively documented and rationalist arguments, a method that stood in direct opposition to the tradition based on popular tales and clearly manipulated interpretations. Somewhere in the Ebro Valley, not far from Tarazona, the Abbot of Cluny contracted several collaborators who were working on the translation of scientific works from Arabic, among them Robert of Ketton, who was asked to translate the Qur'ān into Latin. This text was translated together with some other works on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, the history of the Arabs, and Islamic doctrine.

Robert of Ketton's Latin version was printed four centuries later (first edition in 1543 and the later ones in 1550 and 1556) thanks to the Protestant humanist Theodore Bibliander (Theodor Buchmann, 1505–64). In its time, this publication was frequently consulted, even though it was originally translated in the Middle Ages. It was the standard Latin translation of the Qur'ān across Europe and served as a basis for some translations into modern languages.⁶³

Robert of Ketton renders sura 3:67 as follows:

... cum testamentum, nec non et euangelium post ipsum traditum fuerit,
affirmantes quod nescitis. Ipse quidem nec Iudeus, nec Christianus, *sed
uir dei fidelis, et non incredulus uixit ...*⁶⁴

It is clear that Robert did not want to use any of the Latin words for "Muslim" in the context of Abraham's affiliation and instead opted for the paraphrase "uir dei fidelis" (a man faithful to God), a compromise that would be acceptable to his Christian readership.⁶⁵ The gloss that accompanies the text in Bibliander's edition (1550) states: "Christianus, pater omnium credentium

63 See, among others, Óscar de la Cruz Palma, "La trascendencia de la primera traducción latina del Corán (Robert de Keton, 1142)," *Collatio* 7 (2002): 21–28.

64 Bibliander's edition (1550), as reprinted by *Les Mondes Humanistes* (GRAC-UMR 5037, 2010), 24, <http://sites.univ-lyon2.fr/lesmondeshumanistes/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Le-Coran-latin-de-Bibliander2.pdf>. Italics mine.

65 It should be noted, however, that in his circumlocution Robert of Ketton remains faithful to the original meaning of the text. See Uri Rubin's entry on Ḥanīf in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001–06), 402; and Rubin, "Hanifyya and Ka'ba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of Din Ibrahim," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1990): 85–112; reprinted in: Uri Rubin, *Muhammad the Prophet and Arabia* (Farham: Ashgate Variorum, 2011).

et Iudeus circumcisus" (Christian, father of all believers and a circumcised Jew).⁶⁶ However, in one of the medieval manuscripts with Robert of Ketton's translation (BNF MS Arsenal 1162) there is a gloss, probably written by Peter of Poitiers,⁶⁷ which, although technically referring to the previous fragment (3:66), deals with the issue of Abraham's religion:

Namely, why do you say that you are in Abraham's religion, if nothing in the Old Testament and the Gospel relates to him, but rather a better law, which he had long before, which I also now preach? He means, and this is also what the Saracens say, that they obey Abraham's law and that this is the [law] that had now been renewed by Mahumet, after it had been lost, that is to say, after the Old Testament and Christ's Gospel had been introduced to temper [Abraham's] law because men could not obey it.⁶⁸

This gloss explains the concept of the *Hanīf*, the believer who is not a polytheist nor a Jew or Christian and who professes a pure monotheistic creed.⁶⁹ Although the translation does not state that Abraham was a Muslim, the writer of the gloss had no objections to saying that Muḥammad's law is the law of Abraham.

Half a century later, in about 1210, Mark of Toledo, most probably unaware of Robert of Ketton's work, translated the Qur'ān into Latin again. The new version was commissioned by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, archbishop of Toledo during the years 1209–47. Mark of Toledo was a canon in the Toledo church from 1193 to 1216. Just like Robert of Ketton, he was originally a translator of scientific works, specifically on medicine, from Arabic into Latin. According to the translator himself, he was inclined to do this translation because it was by

66 Bibliander, 24.

67 José Martínez-Gázquez, "Glossae ad ALCHORAN LATINUM. Roberti Ketenensis translatoris, fortasse a Petro Pictaviensi redactae: An Edition of the Glosses to the Latin Qur'ān in BNF MS Arsenal 1162," *Medieval Encounters* 21, no. 1 (2015): 81–120, esp. 85.

68 Affirmantes quod nescitis?: Id est, cur vos in fide Abrahe esse dicitis, cum et Testamentum Vetus et Euangelium nichil ad eum pertineat, sed melior lex quam ipse longe ante tenuit, quam eciam ego modo predico. Vult enim intelligi et hoc sarraceni dicunt quod legem Abrahe teneant et haec sit quae modo renouata [est] per Mahumet, cum iam perdita esset, interiectis scilicet, Veteri Lege et Euangeliō Christi quae ad temperamentum legis illius data sunt, quia non poterant eam homines ferre. BNF MS Arsenal 1162, fol. 35v. Cf. Martínez-Gázquez, "Glossae ad ALCHORAN LATINUM," 102.

69 See Uri Rubin's studies quoted above.

the request of Archbishop Don Rodrigo and Don Mauricio, archdeacon of the church in Toledo and later the bishop of Burgos.⁷⁰

Unlike Robert of Ketton's translation quoted above, there is no appreciable anxiety over the rendition of the word "Muslim" in relation to Abraham in sura 3:67: "Non fuit Abraham Iudeus neque Christianus, sed Ysmahelita neque ydolatra" (Abraham was not a Jew, nor was he Christian, but he was a Muslim ['ysmahelita'] and not an idolater).⁷¹ However, here also the *āya* is glossed. The content of the gloss varies in each manuscript, from a simple "mendacium" (a lie), through "Ysmael fuit filius Abrae" (Ysmael was Abraham's son), to the most explicit: "de Abrahe mendacium non fuit Abraham neque Christianus nisi Ysmahelita" (A lie about Abraham, Abraham was not Christian or Muslim), and "potius Ysmael fuit ebreus quam Christianus" (Ysmael was a Jew rather than a Christian).⁷²

In fact, the lack of polemical connotations in both Juan Gabriel's translation and glosses of the Qur'ān is matched only by the author who worked on this text more than a century later (1669), Germanus de Silesia. The Silesian Franciscan and Arabist Dominicus Germanus de Silesia (1588–1670) spent the last years of his life in seclusion at the monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial working on a new Latin version of the Qur'ān. His translation is extant in several manuscripts, four of which are autographs that show signs of intense correcting and editing. His translation was moreover accompanied by the Arabic text and extensive comments.⁷³

Germanus translated the sura in question as follows: "Nequaquam fuit Abraham Iudeus neque Christianus sed fuit Hanafita" (By no means was Abraham a Jew or a Christian, but he was a *Hanafita* [*Hanif*])); and he added in the respective gloss: "i. puritanus, declinans omnem falsam religionem, uno uerbo, fuit Moslemanus, hoc est, bonus alcoranista, cum ipse non attribueret Deo aliquem socium" (meaning *puritanus*, declining all false religions, in a word, he was a Muslim, that is, a good *alcoranista*, as he did not attribute to God any equal).

⁷⁰ See, among others, Thomas E. Burman, "Mark of Toledo," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*. Vol. 4, (1200–1350), ed. David Thomas and Alexander Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 150–55.

⁷¹ Nàdia Petrus Pons, *Alcoranus Latinus quem transtulit Marcus canonicus Toletanus. Estudio y Edición crítica*, Madrid: CSIC 2016, 47.

⁷² *Alcoranus Latinus quem transtulit Marcus canonicus Toletanus*, 406.

⁷³ Germán de Silesia, *Interpretatio Alcorani litteralis. Parte I: La traducción latina; introducción y edición crítica*, ed. Antonio García Masegosa (Madrid: CSIC, 2009).

Furthermore, some other fragments in Robert of Ketton and Egidio's translations have parallel glosses concerning Abraham. For example, in sura 2:140 ("Illi uero dicunt, Abraham, et Ismaëlem, eorumque sequaces Iudeos uel Christianos fuisse. Huius tamen rei ueritatem agnoscant, meliusque Deus. Sed cum taceant, peccant," in Bibliander's edition⁷⁴), the medieval gloss is not particularly revealing: "Illi: Scilicet, Iudei uel Christiani" (they, meaning the Jews or Christians),⁷⁵ whereas Juan Gabriel elaborates more:

These three interpreters say that the Jews say Abraham was a Jew, and Christians say that he was Christian, but the truth is he was a Moor and they say that this was the Christians' and Jews' biggest sin, this is said in Book 1, chapter, verse 66 (3:67). There it is also said that Jews and Christians hid Muḥammad's name and deleted it from their Scriptures and this is what is called "hiding the evidence."⁷⁶

Although both the glosses agree that the reference is to Christians and Jews, only Juan Gabriel seizes the opportunity to present a broader picture of the dispute concerning Abraham's identity. A similar situation occurs in sura 3:23 ("Partium libri latoribus ad librum ascitis, ut inter eos iudicium discretionem praebeat, quidam eorum renuunt." in Bibliander's edition),⁷⁷ where the medieval gloss states only "Qui, scilicet, non toti libro credunt."⁷⁸ (those who do not believe in the entire book). On the other hand, Juan Gabriel's gloss highlights the importance of Abraham's distinctiveness and underlines the fact that the Jews had been unable to disprove his "Muslim" identity:

They say that the basis of this verse is that Mochamad disputed once with the Jews, who, it is said, always resisted Machomed's law because of envy, and Machomed said that his law was the law of Abraham, and the Jews replied that Abraham was a Jew and not a Moor, then it is said that Machomad denied it vigorously and offered himself to prove it from the

⁷⁴ Bibliander, 13.

⁷⁵ Martínez-Gázquez, "Glossae ad ALCHORAN LATINUM," 95.

⁷⁶ Pro uersu 138 (2:140): Dicunt tres interpres illi quod iudei dicunt Abraham fuisse iudeum, christiani uero fuisse christiani [sic], sed reuera fuit maurus et hanc [sic] dicunt fuisse maximum peccatum iudeorum et christianorum, hoc dicunt lib[er] 1, cap[ut] vers. 66 (3:67). Ibidem dicunt quod iudei et christiani abscondiderunt nomen Machom et deleuerunt illud e scripturis suis et hoc est quod dicit "abscondere testimonium."

⁷⁷ Bibliander, 22.

⁷⁸ Martínez-Gázquez, "Glossae ad ALCHORAN LATINUM," 100.

Torah, and when he asked that he be shown the Torah, it is said that they refused.⁷⁹

It is possible to infer that what Juan Gabriel is struggling to achieve here is in a certain sense directly opposed to what he was working on with Figuerola. When the convert was collaborating with the Christian preacher in Spain, he was providing Islamic exegetical material to be used in a polemical anti-Muslim context; here he uses the same quotations but in tentatively pro-Muslim light. By blurring the borders between Christianity and Islam, in opposition to Judaism if need be, Juan Gabriel could demonstrate that the Patriarch venerated by his Catholic patrons was in fact a Muslim, and consequently, there was a place for Islam in a Christian country. This strategy was not so different from that of the forgeries of Sacromonte, although it was independent of it: to broaden the definition of Christianity and prevent it from becoming exclusive.⁸⁰ To support this thesis further, some attention should be paid to Juan Gabriel's Latin translation *per se*, rather than its glosses, and in particular to the use he makes of the word "catholicus" and its cognates.⁸¹

Juan Gabriel uses the terms "catholica," "catholicus," and "catholice" approximately forty times in total in his translation.⁸² Interestingly, he does not render as "catholic" one specific Arabic word but rather a whole group of words. These words derive from the Arabic verbs: خَلَقَ (being white, pure),

79 Pro uersu 22 (3:23): Dicunt quod fundamentum illius uersus est quod quadam uice Mochamad disputaret cum iudeis, qui semper propte inuidiam, inquiunt, resistebant legi Machomed, et diceret Machomed quod lex sua esset lex Abrahamae, respondarentque iudei quod Abraham erat iudeus non maurus, tum inquiunt quod Machomad hoc strenue negavit, obtulitque se probaturum illud ex Tora, et quando peteret Toram sibi ostendi, inquiunt, illos illud recusasse.

80 Manuel Barrios Aguilera and Mercedes García-Arenal, *Los plomos del Sacromonte, inventación y tesoro* (Valencia: Universidad, 2006); and García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). See also *Book of the Outstanding Qualities and Miracles of Our Lord Jesus and of His Mother the Holy Virgin Mary: Edition and Annotated Translation of Sacromonte Lead Book Number 7*, ed. PS van Koningsveld and GA Wiegers (unpublished manuscript).

81 The use of the term "catholicus" in Juan Gabriel's translation was first dealt with, albeit briefly, in our paper "The Law of Abraham the Catholic."

82 2:94, 2:112, 2:131, 2:135, 2:139, 3:20, 3:95, 4:125, 4:146, 6:79, 6:161, 7:29, 7:32, 10:22, 10:105, 11:75, 16:120, 16:123, 19:51, 22:31, 29:65, 30:30, 31:32, 37:40, 37:74, 37:128, 37:160, 37:169, 38:83, 39:2, 39:3, 39:11, 39:14, 40:14, 40:65, 49:3, 98:5.

أَسْلَمَ (become Muslim), أَنَا بَ (being upright), (to convert, return to God), and امْتَحِنَ (examine).

Therefore, the word “catholicus” and the alike can be seen as a sort of catch-all category encompassing various positive and intrinsically Islamic terms. For instance, Juan Gabriel translates verse 2:94

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ الدَّارُ آلاًخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةٌ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَّوْا الْمَوْتَ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

as

Dic tu: “Si res alterius saeculi uidetur uobis magis catholica apud Deum quam homines, quare desiderate mortem, si estis ueraces!”

The Arabic phrase حَالِصَةٌ مِنْ is rendered as “magis catholica.” However, in verse 2:112, the word “catholicus” corresponds to the Arabic أَسْلَمَ, resulting in the translation of

لَيْلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

as

Certe ille qui fuit catholicus Deo in sua lege et est benignus, habebit mercedem apud creatorem suum et non habebit metum neque tristiciam.

Similarly, in verse 2:131 the verb أَسْلَمَ is translated as “Sis catholicus”:

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلَمَ قَالَ أَسْلَمَتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Et quando dixit ei dominus eius: “Sis catholicus creatori nationum!”

Furthermore, مِلَّةٌ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا (3:95, 4:125) is translated as “legem cattholicam Abraham” or “legem catholicam Abrahae.” It is noteworthy that Abraham is not the only prophet described as catholic; so is Moses in verse 19:51:

وَادْجُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخَلِّصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا

Et feci memoriam in libro Moyse, qui fuit catholicus, et fuit nuncius et propheta.

In this fragment, as we can see, it is not the word حَنِيفًا that is translated as “catholicus,” but مُخَلِّصًا.

These examples can certainly be construed as the result of the translator’s inability to find a Latin equivalent (in fact, Juan Gabriel’s “catholicus” is often corrected by Leo Africanus). However, the very fact that “catholic” is the word that is used, and not, for example “pure,” “virtuous,” or “upright” is telling in itself.⁸³ Here again the converted *faqīh* attempts to bridge the gap between the two faiths, borrowing Christian terminology in order to describe Muslim concepts. Somehow this translation strategy is not that different from the one employed by Pedro de Alcalá in his *Arte para ligeramente saber la lengua arábiga* (Granada, 1506?). In the struggle to find Arabic terms that would do justice to Christian terminology, Pedro de Alcalá opted for providing the reader with a vocabulary with clearly Islamic connotations: “church” is translated as *masjid*, “Mass” rendered as *ṣalāt*, and a “preacher” as *faqīh*. Martín Pérez de Ayala adopted the same approach in his *Doctrina cristiana en lengua Arábiga y Castellana de los nuevamente convertidos del Reyno de Valencia* (Valencia, 1566).⁸⁴ Just like these authors, Juan Gabriel also faced the problem of how to translate something as transcendental and impalpable as faith. He could have chosen to use other terminology, such as “maurus” for أَسْلَمٌ, which is the word he uses on other occasions, but he must have decided that this would not have an equivalent religious connotation. One gets the impression that the convert was not territorial as far as his religious views were concerned; he saw equivalents and points of convergence between Islam and Christianity and seemed comfortable enough to leave traces of this attitude throughout the translation.

83 This inclusive approach is also found in Islamic mysticism, present in the Lead Books as well, see PS van Koningsveld and GA Wiegers, “The Book of the Enormous Mysteries that James the Apostle Saw on the Sacred Mountain for the Great Gathering, Written at His Order by Cecilio, His Disciple: Lead Book Number 22 in the Sacro Monte Archive, Granada: Arabic Text and English Translation with Notes,” in *Nuevas aportaciones al conocimiento y estudio del Sacro Monte. IV centenario fundacional (1610–2010)*, ed. María Julieta Vega García-Ferrer, María Luisa García Valverde and Antonio López Carmona (Granada: Fundación Euroárabe, 2011), 259–69.

84 On these authors and their evangelizing strategies see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain*, 39–46.

One cannot deny a certain didactic value in such an approach, visible both in the glosses and in the translation: using a known vocabulary and focusing on familiar religious personages is an excellent teaching strategy, allowing the reader to build on already familiar concepts. This approach is at odds with that taken by medieval readers of the Qur'ān, who glossed the text in accordance with the polemical circumstances in which the Iberian translations were undertaken. In other words, the openness of the Italian intellectual milieu made possible a Latin translation of the Qur'ān with fewer polemical annotations in addition to neutral glosses that could be used as a tool to better understand Islam.

Having said this, the material presented above leaves me with numerous questions and reservations. The first group of reservations is strictly technical: glosses, informal as they are by nature, differ from one another in every possible way. Sometimes they can be squeezed between the lines and on other occasions they occupy half a folio; sometimes they are in disagreement with the text and elsewhere they enter into symbiosis with it, filling in information gaps; and finally, sometimes they are merely philological annotations, whereas on other occasions they are part of a broader ideological debate. In short, there are innumerable reasons why it is challenging to provide a clear-cut comparison between different sets of glosses. However, in spite of their lack of homogeneity, there is no doubt that glosses to the Qur'ān constitute relevant information about the reception of Islam in Latin Christendom. This modest sample of glosses proves that medieval translators and glossers perceived the danger resulting from the Muslim appropriation of the figure of Abraham, and their critiques contained strong polemical potential. Conversely, Juan Gabriel, probably conscious of this tradition, took advantage of the rhetorical possibilities the Qur'ānic passages offered him and seized the opportunity to present Abraham in a way that suggested a convergence between Christianity and Islam.

Secondly, there are some pressing questions concerning Juan Gabriel in particular. His glosses constitute, as far as I am aware, the only material produced by him personally without direct ecclesiastical collaboration. They are also the only piece of writing the convert produced that was not immediately inserted into anti-Muslim polemical discourse. Taking into consideration that Juan Gabriel was writing about his former religion that was being persecuted, on what basis did he decide on the themes for the glosses? It seems clear that the identity of Abraham was a key issue for Spanish Moriscos, and the ideological implications of the disputes surrounding Abraham had been anticipated in the medieval Qur'ānic glosses. Nevertheless, Juan Gabriel elaborated on this subject in a very discreet and subtle way, and although it seems very probable that he intended to show that Islam and Christianity shared common ground, we cannot be sure if that was his only agenda.

CHAPTER 10

Vox Populi: Carnal Blood, Spiritual Milk, and the Debate Surrounding the Immaculate Conception, ca. 1600

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Abstract

In the early modern period, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was intensely defended by Spain, its cult even turned into a symbol of the Catholic Monarchy. However, in its earliest stage, the Spanish campaign in support of the Immaculate was immersed in controversy: some of the people promoting it were accused of not having a “pure” Old Christian ancestry. This article reads the origins of the Immaculate debate against the background of social ideas of purity and contamination.

Keywords

Immaculate Conception – Baroque painting – history of racism – purity of blood

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It would be hard to think of any image from Spanish Golden Age painting for which the word “symbolic” applied better than that of the Immaculate Conception. When talking of the Virgin’s pure Conception, before a concept or an idea, it is a certain type of painting that comes to mind, one most famously envisioned by artists such as Murillo and showing the isolated figure of the Virgin hovering in the skies standing over the sharpened shape of the crescent moon (Fig. 10.1). In fact, the iconography that we recognize as emblematic of the dogma was itself, if not invented in Spain, then particularly promoted by that country.¹ We therefore need to remember not only the contribution of Sevillian artists to this representation, but also that some of the most famous paintings that we identify as the “Immaculate Conception,” even if painted by non-Spanish artists (from Guido Reni’s painting now at the Metropolitan to Rubens’s and Tiepolo’s at the Prado) were in fact Spanish commissions: Reni’s for King Philip IV (1627),² Rubens’s for the Marquis de Leganés (1628), and Tiepolo’s for the Royal Palace in Aranjuez. To a certain extent, during the seventeenth century, the image of the Immaculate Conception was also that of the Catholic Church and simultaneously that of the “Catholic Monarchy” in particular.

Moreover, the beginnings of the cult of the Immaculate Conception can be traced back to a very concrete place and tied to very precise circumstances. It was in Seville, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, that historiography has traditionally located the ignition point of a movement that was soon to spread to all territories of the Monarchy. Another important, and no less puzzling element of the Immaculate’s origins is that it was immediately resisted and questioned. Not only from the Roman authorities, but from inside the local society itself. In fact, in the beginning, the Immaculate’s cult was as much enthusiastically supported as popularly contested.

¹ For a survey of the topic see Suzanne L. Stratton-Pruitt, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

² Hibbard, Howard, “Guido Reni’s Painting of the Immaculate Conception,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 1 (1969): 19–32.



FIGURE 10.1 Bartolomé Esteban Murillo “Inmaculada Concepción de los Venerables”
1678 ca.
©MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO, MADRID (SPAIN)

While the origins of this new modern episode of the Immaculate devotion has already produced a very substantive bibliography, this has concentrated on its political, devotional and theological aspects, underestimating the importance of two types of complementary sources: visual, or more precisely, pictorial, on the one hand; and more controversial testimonies, such as texts that circulated orally or even written on the walls without ever arriving to the printing press, or those recorded in the Inquisition archive, on the other. Taking visual evidence as the main focus of analysis and interpreting it against the backdrop of this wider range of sources, this article suggests that the problem of “purity” that the dogma encapsulated is not to be interpreted only in a devotional, nor only in a political frame, but in a broader “social” one, by which I mean the way seventeenth century Iberian society was structured according of notions of purity, but also of contamination.

As is well known, the transition of the Immaculate Conception's from pious belief to incontrovertible truth, from popular devotion to dogma, was long and arduous. It was not complete until 1854, after a two-centuries-long struggle in which the pressure of the Catholic Monarchy was crucial.³ For more than a century the Spanish Habsburgs, including Philip III, Philip IV and finally Charles II, advocated for a cause that they considered to be representative of the monarchy's commitment to the defense of the faith. The Spanish pledge of Mary's purity opened a new chapter in the history of the belief that was very different from its medieval one. As we know, this doctrine's status had remained unresolved for more than a century, at least since the schismatic Council of Basel pronounced in favor of it, establishing both theological and scriptural arguments that failed to win universal acceptance. Since 1437 the dogma had therefore been languishing in a theological limbo from which authorized voices of the Church, oftentimes from the Dominican order, adamantly refused to save it. As Thomas Izbicki summarized the situation some years ago, using the words of one puzzled sixteenth-century observer, “The Council of Basel gave birth to a Basilisk.”⁴

3 Ineffabilis Deus (December 8, 1854).

4 Thomas M. Izbicki, “The Immaculate Conception and Ecclesiastical Politics from the Council of Basel to the Council of Trent: The Dominicans and Their Foes,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 96 (2005): 145–70. On the previous medieval history of the dogma, see Marielle Lamy, *L'Immaculée Conception. Étapes et enjeux d'une controverse au Moyen-Âge (XII^e–XV^e siècles)* (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 2000). For this cult in Medieval Spain, see Lesley K. Twomey, *The Serpent and the Rose: The Immaculate Conception and Hispanic Poetry in the Late Medieval Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

The controversy hibernated for more than two centuries until it dramatically awoke in Seville in 1613. On September 8th of that year—so the most authoritative local history says—a Dominican friar preached against this pious belief from a pulpit in his Sevillian monastery.⁵ This lead to an explosion of religious fervor emerging out of the social base but having immediate support from several religious orders—Franciscans, Carmelites, Mercedarians and, particularly, the Jesuits, in whose monasteries stirring Immaculist sermons were delivered, and later printed.⁶ That Dominicans did not keep silent, but considered this to be an orchestrated attack on the theological authority of the order, and particularly on that of Thomas Aquinas, who had traditionally resisted the dogma, is very well known. Less known, however, are the terms in which the Dominicans repeatedly fortified their positions.

Needless to say, the best defense is an attack. According to the Jesuit Martín de Roa, there was a deliberate campaign to discredit his order: the streets were inundated with inflammatory pamphlets against the Jesuits, so that there was no “plaça, Castillo, ni calle” where they couldn’t be seen or heard.⁷ That is, until Archbishop Pedro de Castro seized them and prohibited their circulation.⁸ What Roa fails to mention is that the archbishop ordered a notary to have all those accusations carefully transcribed so that he could use them in defense

⁵ A canonical account of the episode is to be found in Diego Ortiz y Zúñiga, *Annales Eclesiásticos y Seculares de la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla* (Seville, 1677), years 1613 and onwards.

⁶ There is a detailed description in Juan-Francisco Bonnefoy, OFM, “Sevilla por la Inmaculada en 1614–17,” *Archivo Iberoamericano* 15 (1955): 1–33. Stanko Vranich, “Carta de un ciudadano de Sevilla. La guerra mariana en la Sevilla del siglo XVII,” *Archivo Hispalense* 44 (1966), 241–74. See also, Antonio Luis Cortés Peña, “Andalucía y la Inmaculada Concepción en el siglo XVII,” in *Religión y Política durante el Antiguo Régimen* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2001), 103–48. José Antonio Ollero Pina, “*Sine Labe Concepta. Conflictos eclesiásticos e ideológicos en la Sevilla de principios del siglo XVII*,” in *Grafías del imaginario. Representaciones culturales en España y América (siglos XVI–XVIII)*, coord. Carlos-Alberto González-Sánchez and Enriqueta Vila Vilar (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), 301–35. Traditionally, these conflicts have been explained as the result of a theological—and ultimately political—dispute between these religious orders. See most recently: José Domínguez Búrdalo and Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, “El dogma de la Inmaculada Concepción como arma de confrontación territorial en la Sevilla del siglo XVII,” *Rilce* 26, no. 2 (2007): 303–24. An overview of the printing of Immaculist sermons in Miguel Ángel Núñez Beltrán, *La oratoria sagrada en la época del barroco. Doctrina, cultura y actitud ante la vida desde los sermones sevillanos del siglo XVII* (Universidad de Sevilla-Fundación Focus-Abengoa, 2000), 200–21.

⁷ Martín de Roa, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Granada, H. Real, MS 1–008 (5), (n.d.). There is a modern edition (Écija, 2005), which I have not been able to consult.

⁸ Archbishop Castro went so far as to incarcerate one Dominican friar for oposing the dogma. See n. 23 below.

of the Jesuits before the king, if necessary. A copy dated April 4, 1616, is in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.⁹ A full analysis of this document—which denounces twenty-four separate incidents ranging from verbal insults to physical aggression—would require much more space than I have here. Surprisingly, this important source is seldom cited, nor has it ever been seriously considered in the otherwise exhaustive and abundant literature on the origins of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The texts that Castro had copied are mostly poems that are simple in both their style and content: in one way or another, most of them make use of a strong, repetitive, and “racist” rhetoric.¹⁰ The words most frequently used in these texts are “casta” and “linaje” (*lineage*), synonym terms of “raza,” already since the late fifteenth century. These have a long history in describing social minorities in which both lineage (nature) and culture, overlap. “Raza”—as written in Covarrubias’s 1611 Dictionary—is used when a lineage is contaminated with either Jewish, or “Moor” blood.¹¹ However, in the Sevillian texts we are about to comment, the Morisco and New Christians of Jewish descent, now share the scene with mulattoes and black Africans.

A good example of this is a poem written and printed in July 1615 targeting the archbishop. The poem first describes Seville’s multicultural society, with particular insistence on its ethnic variety:

Santissimos raperos y escribanos
virtuosos lacayos y escuderos,
sabios mulatos, doctos çapateros,

⁹ *Memorial sumario de las veinte y quatro informaciones que el Arçobispo de Sevilla mandó hazer, cerca de las contradicciones que los religiosos de Santo Domingo han hecho a los que defienden y siguen la opinión pia, de que la Virgen N.S. fue concebida sin pecado original*, Biblioteca Nacional de España (hereinafter BNE), MS 9956, h. 43–55v.

¹⁰ Even if written with two quite different agendas, two recent studies call attention to Iberia as the place where, during the Middle Ages, “race acquired an ethnic meaning,” questioning that “racism” is a modern invention: David Nirenberg, “Was there race before modernity? The example of ‘Jewish’ blood in late medieval Spain,” in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Ben Isaac, Yossi Ziegler and Miriam Eliav-Feldon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 232–64. And, Francisco Bethencourt, *Racisms. From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 2013), the quotation in p. 6. An opposite, non biological understanding of the concept of race for the Middle Ages is to be found, for example, in Robert Bartlett, “Medieval ad Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 39–56.

¹¹ Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana, o Española* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611). “Raza, en los linajes se toma en mala parte, como tener alguna parte de moro o judío.”

religiosos, corchetas, y ortelanos:
 divinos pages, sastres soberanos,
 moçós de mulas, *negros* pasteleros,
 benditos congregados carniceros,
 açacanes, pastores, cirujanos, [...]

It then proceeds to encourage Sevillians not to depart from Thomas Aquinas's position, threatening them with the image of the sheepdog overseeing the flock's religious orthodoxy:

no hagays caso ya de ningun santo,
 efinid, blasfemad, de Dios agora,
 y perseguid la religión, que tanto
 ha perseguido los *linages vuestros* [my emphasis].
 Ea soldados diestros.
 Que el pastor para daros passo franco
 atado tiene el perro negro y blanco.

The black and white dog surveying the flock refers of course to the Dominican order but also to the Inquisition tribunal, which was very much under its control. This was made clear by Father Alfonso Guerrero, the Dominican master of novices, when preaching at the Regina Angelorum monastery over the following days. Guerrero described the Immaculist flock as "gente baxa y ordinaria, vulto ruyn, amontonada," while calling the members of his own order, the Dominicans, "bold swimmers" ("valientes nadadores") "y que en su religion no avia Iudios, ni Moros, ni mulatos, ni Moriscos *como en todas las demás*" (my emphasis).¹² "In the Dominican order, there were no Jews, no Moors, no mulattoes, nor Moriscos, unlike in the other religious orders."

One more text from the same document might help to illustrate the racial anxiety lurking behind the conflict. It pertains to one of the most active supporters of the dogma, the Jesuit Juan de Pineda. Pineda, as we will later see, not only preached but also did important historical research to establish the support that the monarchy had given to the cause since the Middle Ages. One day, Pineda (Fig. 10.2) woke up to find this poem—dated July 7, 1615—posted on Seville's streets:

¹² *Ibid.*



FIGURE 10.2 Francisco Pacheco
 Portrait of Juan de Pineda
Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos
 1599-1644
 MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

Mucho a la injusta gravedad apoca
 de un Rabi de la ley el hablar tanto
 quando deviera por seguir a un santo
 donde el puso los pies, poner la boca.
 Pero lo que mas a ira me provoca,
 y lo que no podre dezir sin llanto,
 es ver que de limpieza, dando espanto
 quiera tratar, quien tiene en si tan poca.
 Ver que en las citas mienta en estremo

Y hable de Guzmanes un Teatino,
 esto tambien me tiene sin sosiego:
 mas mire lo que habla, porque temo,
 que Pineda que a todos huella; *pino*
dara en las brasas por huir del fuego.

The text needs little commentary: it plays with his name (Pineda) and the word “pino” (pine tree), suggesting that the Jesuit would finish his days burning at the stake of the Inquisition’s fire—“pine-wood will turn to live coal in order to escape the fire”—not because he wrongly argued for Mary’s Immaculate purity but because he did so being of the most impure lineage, meaning of course that he was of Jewish descent. There is no evidence that Pineda was of a converso lineage, but this was of course the most common accusation used in anti-Jesuit propaganda.¹³ In fact, as has been extensively explored by such historians as Robert Markys, Saint Ignatius’s openness to accepting New Christians among his followers and his reluctance to make “pure blood” a condition for membership in the Society of Jesus planted a seed of tolerance with which the Jesuit order was still struggling at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Interestingly enough, the most important visual document that we have from these early years of the Immaculist fervor, offers a very different, if not opposite image of the episode, one not of theological dispute and urban violence but of a city organized around its monolithic faith. The very well-known *Allegory of the Immaculate Conception* (Fig. 10.3), a huge canvas, almost four meters tall (360 × 231 cm)—no doubt one of the most powerful visual allegories of the Spanish Baroque—was painted and signed by the artist Juan de Roelas, who was also a secular priest.¹⁴ The painting gives a visual account of

¹³ See Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “La conversión infinie des conversos: Des ‘nouveaux-chrétiens dans la compagnie de Jésus au 16e siècle,” *Annales HSS* 4 (1999): 875–93; Thomas M. Cohen, “Jesuits and New Christians: The Contested Legacy of St. Ignatius,” *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 42, no. 3 (2010): 1–46; Robert Aleksander Markys, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry and Purity-of-Blood Laws in the Early Society of Jesus* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010); Emmanuele Colombo, “The Watershed of Conversion: Antonio Possevino, *New Christians and Jews*,” in “*The Tragic Couple*: Encounters Between Jews and Jesuits,” ed. James Bernauer and Robert Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 25–42.

¹⁴ Provenance: San Benito el Real Monastery (Valladolid). On Juan de Roelas, see *Juan de Roelas (h. 1570–1625)*, coord. Rocío Ortiz Moyano (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 2008), exhibition catalog, Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla. The painting was priced by Bartolomé González and Eugenio Cajés in March 1618 and remained with the Royal Collection at the Alcázar (Madrid) at least until 1686. It was donated to San Benito at an unknown date. As stated in the payment, Roelas had arrived to in Madrid in 1616:



FIGURE 10.3 Juan de Roelas
Alegory of the Immaculate Conception
1616
MUSEO NACIONAL DE ESCULTURA, VALLADOLID

recent events in Seville and was clearly produced in connection with the delegation that the Sevillian archbishop Pedro de Castro sent to the court, which was at that time in Valladolid, with the explicit objective of securing the monarchy's support for the dogma.¹⁵ The painting is not only a theological allegory of the dogma, the way it has usually been interpreted, but more important and visually evident, of the heterogeneous Sevillian population that supported it.

As we will later see in more detail, this canvas is just one more document reflecting the interest of different institutions in promoting the cult to the Immaculate as a devotion that was socially inclusive, breaking across blood prejudices deeply rooted in Seville's society. Besides Pedro de Castro's pastoral policy, there are at least two institutions that seem to have supported such a policy: the just mentioned Jesuits, with which Castro closely collaborated. And the members of the Confraternity *de la Granada*, or Pomegranate, one member of which, Bernardo de Toro, formed part of the delegation sent to Valladolid with the painting. The story behind the painting, therefore, is not only one of theological debates but also social anxieties, and the lives of the protagonists behind it also one of success, but also of persecution and failure. The painting is divided into two parts, with the image of the Virgin at the top surrounded by angels holding emblems and mirrors, while the lower part shows the people of Seville celebrating their faith in the Virgin. In between the heavenly army and the urban procession, the allegory of Fame (her pen strategically placed in between an ear and an eye) sounds a double trumpet, one of its bells pointing downwards, the other one to heaven, its twisted shape making the two levels intertwined. While Mary's universal motherhood presides in heaven, the lower part is dominated by the image of a nursing woman, her generous bosom prominently naked. The Virgin Mary's purity is mirrored in this straightforward image of terrestrial maternity (fig. 10.17).

José Moreno Villa and Francisco Javier Sánchez Cantón, "Documentos sobre pintores recogidos en el Archivo de Palacio," *Archivo Español de Arte* 36 (1936): 262–63 and 267. The artist might have either traveled with the painting or even executed in Madrid. A second, smaller version by the same artist is also kept in the same museum and has the same provenance.

¹⁵ For the Crown's support and the formation of the first Junta, see José María Pou i Marí, "Embajadas de Felipe III a Roma pidiendo la definición de la I. Concepción de María," *Archivo Ibero-American* 35 (1932): 481–525; José Messeguer Fernández, "La Real Junta de la Inmaculada Concepción (1616–1817/20)," *Archivo Ibero-American* 59–60 (1955): 619–886; José Antonio Peinado Guzmán, "La Monarquía española y el dogma de la Inmaculada Concepción. Fervor, diplomacia y gestiones a favor de su proclamación en la edad moderna," *Chronica Nova* 40 (2014): 247–76; and Paolo Broggio, "Teologia, ordini religiosi e rapporti politici: La questione dell'Immacolata Concezione di Maria tra Roma e Madrid (1614–1663)," *Hispania Sacra* 65, no. 1 (2013): 225–81.

As a long inscription indicates, the image depicts what Roelas had personally witnessed: the crowd is brought together in the celebration of one particular moment: a large procession that took place on June 29, 1615, when a sculpture of the Virgin was taken into the Cathedral with all Sevilians (“todos” in the original)—common people, university professors, and representatives of most of the religious orders—escorting it while singing in celebration of her Immaculate conception.¹⁶ One shocking aspect of Roelas’s scene is that it represents a heterogeneous population, with many black children showing prominently in the foreground, and some others mixed in the crowd.

We will go back again to its exuberant, and highly original iconography and in particular to this intriguing parallel between the heavenly and the terrestrial realms at the end of this article. But first, let me explain how I think the dogma of the Virgin’s transcendental purity, the social conflicts and racial prejudices out of which it emerged, and, last but not least, the imagined community of Seville shown in Roelas’s painting are all different aspects of the same problem.

Instead of approaching the Sevilians’ enthusiastic support as a spontaneous episode of popular devotion—the way it has usually been considered in the extensive local historiography—and instead of just taking the debate that followed as the result of a theological resistance, I will consider another interpretative avenue. First and most importantly, I will look at the conflict, and particularly its “racial” content, not as a marginal or rhetorical aspect of the debate but as the very problem to which Mary’s “purity” needed to be confronted.¹⁷

16 “En el año del Señor de 1615 a 29/ de Junio dia del gran vicario de Cristo y principe de los apostoles San Pedro, gobernando la silla apostolica Paulo v y reinando en España/ el muy catolico y poderoso Rey Felipe III/ de su nombre siendo arzobispo de Sevilla el Ilmo sr. Don Pedro de Castro y Quinones y asistiendo Don Diego Sarmiento de Sotomayor conde de Salva/tierra inspiro Dios Nuestro Señor corazones de todos los vecinos de Sevilla/ que acudieron a su iglesia mayor/ donde salieron cantando todo el mundo en general a vo/ces Reina escogida dicen que sois concebida sin peca/do original. Los frailes de San Francisco y Descalzos, los de /Nuestra Señora del Carmen y sus Descalzos, los de San Benito, los de San Basilio, los de la Santísima Trinidad y sus Descalzos, los padres de la Capacha y Terceros de San Francisco, mas veinnte/ mil seglares. Caballeros de Santiago, de Alcantara/ de Calatrava, duques, Condes y marqueses, todos iban ala/bando la Inmaculada Concepcion de la Virgen Nuestra Señora/ concebida sin mancha de pecado original todo el cle/ro con muchos colegiales de la Universidad de /ella ibamos cantando con el mayor regocijo y devucion.”

17 For this I am indebted to Mary Douglas’s theories about how “natural symbols” reflect, or even define, models of society. I expand on these in my conclusions.

Before Seville: Pedro de Castro, the Moriscos, and the Granada Brotherhood

Before I take a closer look at the painting, and the story it tells, I will look first into its early history. As Adriano Prosperi, for example, recently underlined in an excellent article, the “Immaculist craze” certainly did not emerge spontaneously in Seville but had a complex first round played out during the immediately preceding years in the city of Granada. It is not coincidental that before arriving in Seville in 1610, Pedro de Castro had been the archbishop of Granada, where he had enthusiastically supported the authenticity of the Lead Books of Sacromonte, the famous Morisco forgery in which the dogma of Mary’s Immaculate Conception is explicitly invoked.¹⁸ Once transcribed and translated, the books’ “Solomonic” script was revealed to contain the sayings of the Virgin, Saint Peter, and Saint James, as written down by the early Arab bishops of the city, Cecilio and Tesifón. The texts proclaimed the Christian faith of the early Arab population of Iberia, insisting—as it was translated to a wider audience—on particular articles such as that “Mary had been preserved from original sin.” While these do not belong to Islam, they do reflect Qur’ānic teachings which recognize Maryam’s virginity presenting her as a model of purity (Fig. 10.4).¹⁹ While the Lead Books aroused immediate skepticism both in Spain and in Rome, this did not preclude Pedro de Castro from thinking that they supported the dogma’s apostolic origins.

The connections between the two episodes just described are not difficult to prove. The year before the Immaculist War exploded, Granada’s canon, Sánchez Lucero (Fig. 10.5), published in Seville the first in a long list of Immaculist texts that would come out of the Sevillian presses in the following years. In this work, Sánchez Lucero devoted serious attention to the evidence supporting the dogma that was provided in the Lead Books, written in “caracteres

¹⁸ Prosperi, Adriano, “L’Immacolata a Siviglia e la fondazione sacra de la monarchia Spagnola,” *Studi Storici* 47, no. 2 (2006): 481–510.

¹⁹ On this particular aspect of the Lead Books’ Mariology, see Francisco Javier Martínez Medina, “Los hallazgos del Sacromonte a la luz de la historia de la iglesia y de la teología católica,” in *Los Plomos del Sacromonte. Invención y tesoro*, ed. Manuel Barrios Aguilera and Mercedes García-Arenal (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2006), 79–111; Martínez Medina, “El Sacromonte de Granada y los discursos Inmaculistas postresidentistas,” *Arhivo teológico granadino* 59 (1996): 5–57; Amy G. Remensnyder, “Beyond Muslim and Christian: The Moriscos’ Marian Scriptures,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41, no. 3 (2011): 545–76.



ALABADA SEA LA PVRISSIMA
CONCEPCION DE LA MADRE
DE DIOS COCEVIDA SIN PECADO ORIGI
S María no alcanço el pecado original

Estas letras arabicas se han escritas in el Monte S. de Granada de mans de Fr. Cecilio y Thesiphó

187801010
19x1iiii11

FIGURE 10.4 Bernardo Heylan, "Immaculate Conception," in Alonso Ferrol y Caycedo, *Libro de las fiestas ... en honor de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Virgen María* Granada, 1616



FIGURE 10.5 Francisco Pacheco
Portrait of Doctor Gonzalo Sanchez Luzero
Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos
1599–1644
MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

árabigos," Arabic script, that had been revealed to an Arab bishop.²⁰ The text, not surprisingly, is dedicated to Pedro de Castro himself. Similar arguments were used in the following year by the Mercedarian Silvestre de Saavedra²¹ and would be fully developed in 1617 by the Jesuit Santiago Granado,²² again in a book dedicated to Archbishop Castro. The memory of the Lead Books was to remain linked to the Immaculate Conception for many years thereafter, as we will see later.

In light of these facts, two main questions have been raised that in my opinion still await satisfactory answers. First, how did a devotion that originated in very particular local and polemical circumstances happen to attract the attention of the king; that is, how do we account for the shift from the local to the global? Second, how does this controversial early history of the devotion relate to the monarchy's sponsorship of a dogma that proclaimed the perfect purity of an uncontaminated human genealogy?

Even though Pedro de Castro's investment in the defense of the doctrine goes back to his Granada bishopric, it was in Seville that the Immaculist movement was first formed in earnest. After he had been brought to Seville, Pedro de Castro joined forces with several social groups—from the Jesuits to local brotherhoods—in what now became an openly "Immaculist" campaign. It would not be an exaggeration to characterize the opposition that this campaign encountered from the Dominican order as brutal. The Sevillian delegation to King Philip III was made up of two cathedral canons, Mateo Vázquez de Leca and Bernardo de Toro, both of whom would subsequently be part of the "Junta" sent by the king to Rome, where they would continue reporting to Archbishop Castro. Having the monarch's support—so reasoned the Sevillian delegation—would help to convince the pope to reclaim the dogma from the ambiguous situation where, as we saw, the Council of Basel had abandoned it.²³

Bernardo de Toro would pay a high price for his advocacy of the dogma. First, Dominican friars threatened that they would dynamite his house as well

20 Gonzalo Sánchez Lucero, *Dos discursos Teologicos en defensa de la Inmaculada Concepcion de la Virgen Santissima Madre de Dios* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1614).

21 Silvestre de Saavedra, *Razon del Pecado Original y de la Preservacion del en la Concepcion Purissima de la Reyna de los Angeles Maria* (Seville: Clemente Hidalgo, 1615).

22 Santiago Granado, *De Inmaculata B.V. Dei Genitricis M. Conceptione* (Seville: Francisco de Lira, 1617).

23 See bibliography, cited n. 6. For a reconstrucción of the 'Junta,' see also now, José Martínez Millán, "Las controversias sobre la Inmaculada Concepción. Surgimiento de la Polémica (1613)," in J. Martínez Millán and María Antonietta Visceglia, eds., *La Monarquía de Felipe III. La Casa del Rey*, I, (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, 2005), 220–26.

as that of any other person who promoted the cause.²⁴ Second, the limited success of his first delegation was publicized to derision in Seville (Gregory xv had banned the public defense of “maculist” positions, although he did not back their opponents).²⁵ Finally, in 1626, the Dominican friars used their influence with the Holy Office to declare him suspect of belonging to a heretical brotherhood known as the Cofradía de la Granada,²⁶ whose devotion to the Conception of the Virgin was supposed to have mystic and apocalyptic overtones.²⁷ Bernardo de Toro, who was at the time in Rome, would never return to his hometown. The reason I mention this episode is also because the Inquisition’s archives provide some of the most interesting information rel-

24 “Començose a hazer coplas ofensivas o motes de una parte a otra, prohibiollo luego el arçobispo [Pedro de Castro] con mandamiento i censuras del provisor. Fixaron otro cedulaon contra el arçediano de Carmona, i contra el padre Bernardo de Toro: en los que dizan i amenazan, que an de volvarles la casa con cinco barriles de polvora, i matar a otros que viven los tomistas.” *El Presidente del Consejo Real me a escrito de V.M. cerca de las opiniones en esta ciudad si Nuestra Señora fue concebida con Pecado Original o no. I los excesos que dice a avido en ello* [Seville, July 28, 1615], BNE, Varios Especiales (VE) 44–69.

25 An anonymous Dominican friar had the following sonnet circulate in Seville mocking Bernardo de Toro for the meager results of his first delegation to Pope Gregory xvth's court: “A Roma fue por todo el bachiller / domine deseoso de alcançar/ que el papa difiniesse sin tardar / la opinion que el defiende sin saber / solo pretende darse a conocer/ siendo lo que peor le puede estar / y su poder mostrando con gastar / trae lo que pudiera sin poder. / Lo cierto es que no sabe a quis vel qui / pues pensando traer definicion/ solo trae en latin un papel sal / y acerca de la pia esto es ansi / ha traído que digan concepcion / pero no sin pecado original.” *Soneto perjudicial contra el buleto de Gregorio 15 en favor de la limpia conception y lo compuso un fraile dominico y estuvo preso por ello en la carçel del Sr Arçobispo*, Real Academia de la Historia (hereinafter RAH) 3747, fol. 182.

26 On the origins of the “Cofradía de la Granada,” see Fernando J. Campese Gallego “Un profeta singular y sus revelaciones desaparecidas, una tradición centenaria en el Siglo de Oro,” in *Testigo del tiempo, memoria del universo. Cultura escrita y sociedad en el mundo ibérico (siglos XV–XVIII)*, ed. Manuel F. Fernández, Carlos Alberto González and Natalia Maillard (Barcelona: Ediciones Rubeo, 2009), 347–66; Campese Gallego, “Gómez Camacho, un profeta paradójico en el Siglo de Oro,” *Investigaciones Históricas* 28 (2008): 11–28; Antonio González Polvillo, “El jesuita y confesor de Santa Teresa de Jesús Rodrigo Álvarez, características y genealogía de su espiritualidad,” *Hispania Sacra* 64 (2012): 141–86; Vicente Lleó Cañal, “La Congregación de la Granada y los artistas sevillanos del Barroco,” in *Temas y Formas hispánicas. Arte, cultura y sociedad*, ed. Carlos Mata Induráin and Anna Morózova (Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2015), 201–17.

27 Antonio González Polvillo, “Inquisidores, dominicos y alumbrados de la Congregación de la Granada en la génesis del inmaculismo sevillano del siglo xvii,” *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia Andaluza* 4 (2001): 117–42.

event to understanding the origins of the Immaculist conflict. But let us look first at the image its supporters sponsored.

Several important studies have described the imaginative, but never completely successful efforts made since the Middle Ages to find an image that would encapsulate the dogma. For centuries, artists struggled to find an iconography to embody the idea of Mary conceived before the creation of time with her soul untainted by original sin.²⁸ This difficulty had even entered the art historical debate. In 1566, Giorgio Vasari described his quite unsatisfactory effort for the Cappella Altoviti (Florence, 1540–41), writing that no other commission had taken him “più studio … più amore e fatica” than this one. Vasari’s painting became popular and served as a model for Luis de Vargas’s depiction of the same subject for the Cathedral of Seville, only a few years later, a work no less complicated than its source of inspiration (Fig. 10.6).²⁹ Besides the intrinsic complexity of the subject, there was of course the doctrinal one. In 1582, the most authoritative voice of Counter-Reformation iconographic policy, Cardinal Gabrielle Paleotti, prohibited artists from depicting the Conception



FIGURE 10.6
Luis de Vargas
Allegory of the Immaculate Conception
CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE

²⁸ The history of the iconography is summarized in Mirella Levi d'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, (New York: College Art Association of America, The Art Bulletin, 1957). See too, Vincenzo Francia, *Splendore di bellezza: L'iconografia dell'Immacolata Concezione nella pittura rinascimentale italiana*, (Vatican City: Libreria editrice vaticana, 2004). For the case of Spain, see Suzanne Stratton, *La Inmaculada Concepción en el arte español* (Madrid: FUE, 1989).

²⁹ Vincenzo Francia, “L’Immacolata Concezione alla ricerca di un modello iconografico,” in *Una donna vestita di sole. L’Immacolata Concezione nelle opere dei grandi maestri*, ed. Giovanni Morello, Vincenzo Francia, and Roberto Fusco (Milan: F. Motta, 2006), 33–39.

of the Virgin, for it was, he argued, nothing but a pious tradition supporting a cult that had no scriptural basis.³⁰

At the beginning of the following century, however, several members of the clergy close to the abovementioned Sevillian “Pomegranate Brotherhood” turned to the oldest and most simple vision of the book of Revelations to represent the mystery of the Virgin’s Conception. They were Miguel Cid, author of the famous *coplas* or popular songs that circulated in the city—“poeta santo,” called him Cervantes—(Fig. 10.7),³¹ and the two delegates to the court in 1615, Mateo Vázquez de Leca (Fig. 10.8) and “maybe—although there is really no substantial evidence—the same Bernardo de Toro in whom the Inquisition was to show the greatest interest (Fig. 10.9).³² Interestingly enough, all three paintings are probably by the same artist, Francisco Pacheco, and follow closely on a model painted by the same Juan de Roelas to which we will come back later. Of course, the iconography was not their invention, but in fact recycled a type used for example by the court artist Juan Pantoja de la Cruz in representing the Virgin as the Woman of the Apocalypse, although with no other explicit reference to the dogma.³³ Unlike Pantoja, however, all these paintings placed the Virgin sitting on the convex side of the moon, that is with both horns pointing downwards, as had been recommended recently by another Sevillian Jesuit, Luis de Alcázar, in his 1614 commentary to the book of Revelations.³⁴

This book was published with beautiful engravings signed by the poet and artist Juan de Jáuregui (Fig. 10.10). In the context of this article, it might be worth mentioning that both Alcázar and Jáuregui were accused in Seville of having Jewish ancestors. On the grounds of this supposed stain, the poet was denied admission in 1628 into the military order of Calatrava, while the Jesuit was even accused of writing a *memorial* against the Statutes on the Purity of Blood (*estatutos de limpieza de sangre*), the institution that determined the distinction between “Old” Christians and those who had either Muslim or

³⁰ “Incorre nel medesimo errore chi voglia raffigurare certe cose che la Chiesa non ha voluto determinare con certezza, come la concezione della gloriosa Vergine.” Gabrielle Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* (1582), (Vatican City, Milan: Lib. ed. Vaticana, Cad and Wellness, 2002), 109.

³¹ See on Miguel Cid, Stanko Vranich, “Miguel Cid (c. 1550–1615): un bosquejo biográfico,” *Archivo Hispalense* 56 (1973): 185–207.

³² Antonio González Polvillo, “La Congregación de la Granada, el Inmaculismo sevillano y los retratos realizados por Francisco Pacheco de tres de sus principales protagonistas: Miguel Cid, Bernardo de Toro y Mateo Vázquez de Leca,” *Atrio: Revista de historia del arte* 15–16 (2009–10): 47–72.

³³ Suzanne Stratton, *La Inmaculada Concepción*, 61.

³⁴ Luis de Alcazar, *Vestigatio arcano sensus Apocalypsi* (Sevilla, 1614).



FIGURE 10.7 Francisco Pacheco
Immaculate Conception with Miguel Cid
1619
CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE



FIGURE 10.8 Francisco Pacheco
Immaculate Conception with Mateo Vázquez de Leca
1621
PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 10.9
Francisco Pacheco
Immaculate Conception with donor (Bernardo de Toro?)
PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 10.10
Juan de Jáuregui
The Woman of the Apocalypse in, Luis de
Alcázar, *Vestigatio arcano sensu Apocalypsi*
(Seville, 1614)

Jewish ancestors.³⁵ My point, and this aspect is worth emphasizing, is not to relate this to their intellectual and artistic activities but to show to what extent racial prejudice tainted Seville's social life.

Pacheco's paintings directly reflect Alcázar's exegesis, one of the finest examples of its kind in Spanish biblical hermeneutics. In his commentary—as

35 Ruth Pike, *Linajudos and Conversos in Seville: Greed and Prejudice in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spain* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 115–32.

Eileen Reeves astutely pointed out³⁶—the Jesuit advised artists to represent the moon as a solid sphere, as “mathematicians”—referring here to Copernicus, but also probably to Galileo—had demonstrated was its true nature. Pacheco’s paintings perfectly illustrate the characteristics that Alcázar claimed for the symbols of the Apocalypse: while enigmatic and obscure, they still had the vividness and clarity, the “*energia et claritas*,” that only “perfect symbols” have.³⁷ It is important to notice, however, that in his lengthy commentary on Revelations 12, Alcázar failed to mystically interpret the “woman clothed with the sun” as the Immaculate Conception. In fact, presenting the Virgin as the woman mentioned in Revelations 12 was part of Catholic visual culture, with or without an explicit reference to the Immaculate Conception, something that could only be understood from the context.

The striking similarity of these paintings, all of them attributed to the painter Francisco Pacheco, speak of a coherent effort to coin what would become the standard iconography in the years to come. All of them repeat a very similar pattern: the Virgin stands on the moon, dressed in red and blue, with her hands in prayer while she looks down in a gesture of mercy. Mary is always crowned and surrounded by an army of little cherubs. What might be considered as a lack of originality on the part of the artist is, I think, quite the opposite: it is the result of a conscious, if not strategic effort to produce an emblematic image of the dogma. Repetition was in fact fundamental to fulfilling this plan: it should not come as a surprise that the three paintings just mentioned (Cid, Leca and Toro) coincide with Bernardo de Toro’s enterprise of mass producing “medals” of the Virgin showing this same image on one side and the Eucharist on its reverse. In 1619, these were cast in the tens of thousands and circulated so widely that they are still quite easy to find in the antiques market (although as far as I know no one ever has tried to identify them). Cast in cheap bronze, the medals soon attracted the attention of the Roman authorities, who prohibited the circulation of the medals in Italy and seized as many as possible (Fig. 10.11A, 10.11B).³⁸ Both the reasons the Roman authorities give for forbidding their production and the contentions of their distributors are noteworthy, despite the fact that these reasons have received no attention from scholars.

On the one hand, Rome argued that the image proclaimed the dogma before it had been decided as such. And in fact, the front of the medal bears the

³⁶ Eileen Reeves, *Painting the Heavens*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 184–225.

³⁷ Notatio 16: “De *energia perfecti symboli et an claritati deserviat*,” in Luis de Alcázar, *Vestigatio arcano sensus Apocalypsi* (Sevilla, 1614), 26.

³⁸ Suzanne Stratton, *La Inmaculada Concepción*, 67.



FIGURE 10.11A
Medal
The Eucharist
17th c.?



FIGURE 10.11B
Medal
The Immaculate Virgin
17th c.?

inscription “sine p[e]cc[ato] orig[inale] concep[ta]” surrounding the figure of Mary, pairing text and image in such a way as to make the latter an illustration of the former. For their part, the defenders of the medals—here represented by a very lengthy Latin speech given by the Franciscan Luke Wadding,³⁹ who came to the aid of the Spanish party—based their defense on very simple reasoning: that the texts contributed nothing that was not already implicit in the image. “Nothing which is not pious, and religious is said in the inscription, nothing different is expressed in these characters, which was not previously in the images” (“quod antea non praecesserit in imaginibus”).⁴⁰ Following a pastoral commonplace that explained images as simple if not transparent texts, as Scripture for the unlettered in the words of Pope Gregory, the defenders of the medals reasoned that what Scripture verbalized was only demonstrated in the images.⁴¹ Wadding’s logic argues for a transitivity of images and texts that is simply false take out. To take just one example, the Roman Paoline chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore (1612)—one of the most important Marian programs predating the Immaculate cause—draws on apocalyptic imagery, but the dedication of the chapel is to the Virgin Mary, not to her Conception.⁴² That similar images circulated since the Middle Ages does not mean that they always and necessarily referred to the controversial doctrine.

It is in the context of this strategic image-policy that the standardized iconography of the Sevillian paintings makes more sense. The members of the

39 Paolo Broggio, “Un teologo irlandese nella Roma del Seicento, il francescano Luke Wadding,” *Roma Moderna e Contemporanea* 18 (2010): 151–78.

40 “Nec inscriptiones superadditae huismodi licentiam debent impedire, dum nihil non religiosum et pium advertatur in litteris; nec quicquam distinctum exprimatur in characteribus, quod antea non praecesserit in imaginibus. Quod adiectae litterae dicunt, id ipsum clarius inculcant imagines, ut recte de aliis imaginibus Iones ille locum tenens Apostolicarum sedium Orientis, dixit in Septima Synodo: *Quidquid* (inquit) *Scriptura dicit, id imagines demonstrant, ita ut assertores sint eorum, quae scripta sunt.* Ita ut potius putandum sit imagines verbis, quam verba imaginibus aliquid addere, cum quod verba afferant, *imago demonstret*”: Luke Wadding, *ΠΡΕΣΒΕΙΑ sive Legatio Philippi III et IV ad ... Paulum PP. V et Gregorium XV ... de definienda controversia Immaculatae Conceptionis Virginiae Mariae per Il. D.F. Antonium a Trejo* (Louvain, 1624), 296.

41 See both a reconstruction and a critical reading of it in Lawrence G. Duggan, “Was art really the ‘book of the illiterate’?,” *Word & Image* 5 (1989): 227–51.

42 Steven F. Ostrow, “Cigoli’s *Immacolata* and Galileo’s Moon: Astronomy and the Virgin in Early Seicento Rome,” *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (1996): 218–35. The same applies to the column dedicated to the Virgin by Paul v (1613–14) in front of Santa Maria Maggiore: Steven F. Ostrow, “Paul v, the Column of the Virgin and the New Pax Romana,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69 (2010): 352–77.

brotherhood walked away from the intricacies of allegory: the Virgin as the visionary woman of the apocalypse revealed her highest condition of purity, something as familiar as it was straightforward. Interestingly enough, as we have already mentioned, the oldest precedent for this iconography had been created by the same Juan de Roelas with a painting that had a very particular meaning for the “Congregación de la Granada.” In fact, the rest of the paintings can be seen as repetitions of this prototype, dated 1612, at least three years before the “Marian crisis” exploded in Seville. This had been commissioned by the members of the brotherhood to celebrate the memory of one their most charismatic members: Fernando de Mata. This painting, today in Berlin (Fig. 10.12), was completed the year of his death, 1612, and—according to the Inquisition’s inquiry—was permanently in the monastery of La Encarnación, in a chapel devoted to the mystery of Mary’s Conception, making the painting’s meaning unequivocal.⁴³ Based most probably on a drawing from life by Francisco Pacheco (Fig. 10.13),⁴⁴ the painting had been executed by Juan de Roelas, the same artist to whom four or five years later Archbishop Pedro de Castro would turn to produce a visual representation of the dogma to aid his campaign at the court.

What meaning this painting had for the brotherhood, the “Congregación de la Granada,” can be understood thanks to the thorough documentation gathered years later by the Holy Office in their effort to demonstrate the heretical roots of the “Immaculate-mania.” Interestingly, some of these documents were letters written by Bernardo de Toro in order to promote the cause by showing how the dogma had been revealed in a mystical rapture to one of the brotherhood’s founders: “and father Camacho, in a rapture during his prayers, God

43 “[Processados de la Inquisición de Sevilla algunos de la congregación de la granada] El Padre Mata clérigo presbítero, confesor y predicador, difunto, que está tenido y estimado en la ciudad de Sevilla por varón de gran virtud y santidad, y pintado en un altar en la iglesia del convento de monjas de la encarnación, y todos los años le predican sermón de sus alabanzas el día que murió, fue cabeza de la dicha congregación y tiene proceso hecho por observante de la seta de alumbrados en años pasados, y fuera deste processo tiene aora otro proceso nuevo de la doctrina arriba referida de la congregación de la granada.” Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereinafter AHN) Inq. Leg. 2963 (cartas). See on this portrait, González Polvillo, “La Congregación de la Granada.”

44 This is the fourth character in this story that happens to be portrayed in Pacheco’s collection, the “Libro de Retratos”: Juan de Pineda, Sánchez Lucero, Alcázar and, now, Fernando de Mata. This proves in itself Pacheco’s closeness to the Immaculist movement and to the Congregación de la Granada in particular.



FIGURE 10.12 Juan de Roelas
Immaculate Conception with Pedro de Mata
1612
GEMÄLDEGALERIE, BERLIN



FIGURE 10.13 Francisco Pacheco
Portrait of Fernando de Mata
Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos
1599–1644
MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

speaking through him, said several things that have been approved by the Holy Office, and among them was that the Virgin Mary had been conceived with no original sin, and that it should be written so that in the years to come, his witness would be necessary for the Holy Church.”⁴⁵ In another document from the same inquisitorial files, the Holy Office described the doctrine of the brotherhood as strongly apocalyptic:

And the members of this confraternity have the particular observance, and prophecy, that once the dogma of the Conception of Our Lady is defined, the members of this brotherhood shall reform the Church. And that on the day of the End of the World those who are still alive of this same brotherhood will die as martyrs in the confession of their faith, and that of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

According to these same documents, the brotherhood’s devotion to the Immaculate Conception went back to a vision experienced by its founder, a shoemaker named Gómez Camacho, who had inwardly seen “that the world was hovering in the air, as Our Lady [the Virgin Mary] had it hanging from one or her hairs, so that it [the world] would fall on the ground if only She had let it go.”⁴⁷

While the Inquisitorial records need to be taken with a grain of salt, especially given the interest the Dominicans would have had in discrediting Bernardo de Toro’s religious agenda, these documents speak to the deeply prophetic climate in which the Sevillian devotion to the Immaculate Conception was grounded. As these documents make clear, the revelations experienced by the founder of the confraternity had been secretly transmitted from one member to another, so that Bernardo de Toro had personally learned of them from Fernando de Mata. For this reason it is not at all surprising that the members of the confraternity turned to the apocalyptic vision of Saint John (and not to the Old Testament allegories as had been traditionally more usual) when searching for an image that would emblematize the mystery. While the book of Revelations was traditionally one of the texts that theologians had mined when looking for figures of the mystery, it would have also reminded the brothers of

⁴⁵ AHN, Inquisición 2597/2.

⁴⁶ AHN, Inquisición 2963.

⁴⁷ “Yten le fue enseñado interiormente que el mundo estaba en el ayre, porque nuestra señora le tenía colgado de un pelo, y que no estaba más para dar con el mundo en el suelo, sino soltar el pelo.” Ibid.

the Granada confraternity of their commitment in its defense as a condition of the reform of the Church.

Bernardo de Toro would never return to Seville. He remained in Rome out of reach of the Inquisition's claws until his death.⁴⁸ He would never give up on the Immaculist cause, and the memory of his Sevillian years surfaced in his artistic commissions. One detail that has been surprisingly overlooked shows up in the large allegorical painting of the Immaculate Conception that Toro commissioned in Rome and that is today in the Aragonese church of Santa María in Monserrato (Fig. 10.14).⁴⁹ The commission is well documented. Cardinal Bernardo Sandoval y Rojas financed it, while Bernardo de Toro was responsible for negotiating the terms of the contract with the painter Louis Cousin. The allegory is clearly reminiscent of the one painted by Roelas for Philip III; but now the argument has shifted. Cousin conceived the allegory as the triumph of faith over heresy—a theme with illustrious examples in medieval Italian painting—but made significant changes. Instead of depicting defeated heretics under the feet of religion, Cousin—and Bernardo de Toro—imagined them as living arguments for the dogma. In the painting, there are three heretics at the Virgin's feet who are identified with inscriptions. To the left, the one wearing a turban is identified as “Mahomet,” and his scroll recalls the words that the Virgin herself had transmitted to the Arab bishop of Granada: “Praeter Mariam et filius eius” (With the exception of Mary and her Son) (Fig. 10.14 bis). Muhammad himself becomes here a witness, even a proof of the doctrine, just a few years before Urban VIII urged the king of Spain to have the Lead books sent to Rome and imposed absolute silence on the matter (1641). In fact, when the Lead Books were examined by Roman theologians, the connection with the dogma of the Virgin's Conception and the already mentioned Qur'anic

48 The best evidence I know of for Bernardo de Toro's interest in sacred images is found in the short book on Roman relics and miraculous images written soon after his arrival in Rome: *Memorial en relacion de los cuerpos santos, y otras reliquias, a que el Padre Doctor Bernardo de Toro Presbytero, y natural de la ciudad de Sevilla, tocó por su persona en parte del año de 1617, y de 1618 en la santa ciudad de Roma, ciudad de Tolentino, Asís, Reccanate, y otras partes. Algunos rosarios que embió a España con esta memoria a la serenissima Infanta nuestra señora Doña Margarita de Austria, Monja profesa Descalça en el Real Convento de Descalças Franciscas de la Villa de Madrid, Año 1618* (BNE, VE 75/38).

49 See on the painting, Marta Cacho, “Una embajada concepcionista a Roma y un lienzo conmemorativo de Louis Cousin (1633),” in *Arte y diplomacia de la monarquía hispánica en el siglo XVII*, ed. José Luis Colomer (Madrid: Fernando Villaverde, 2003), 415–28. Alessandra Anselmi, “Tota pulchra es amica mea et macula non est in te: la Spagna e l'Immacolata a Roma,” in *L'Immacolata nei rapporti tra l'Italia e la Spagna* (Tivoli: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2008), 239–300.



FIGURE 10.14 Louis Cousin
Allegory of the Immaculate Conception
1633
Santa Maria in Monserrato, Rome
PHOTO: AUTHOR



FIGURE 10.14 BIS Louis Cousin
Allegory (detail)
PHOTO: AUTHOR

mariology seemed transparent. This is clear from a letter written by Cardinal Gerolamo Casanate (1680), kept at the Roman Inquisition archive among the papers relating to the Granada brotherhood:

Non mancano altri, si nella Spagna molti Huomini dotti, che commendo-no per buona la dottrina dei Libri, tratti particolarmente dalla credenza che in essi si decidesse l'articolo dell'Inmacolata Conceptione di Maria ...⁵⁰

Roman theologians saw its dogmatic content as the main explanation for the Spaniards' enthusiastic support of the forgery. But why did they? In order to provide one provisional answer, let us now return once more to the Sevillian allegory from which Louis Cousin's Roman painting ultimately derives.

50 Archivio del Sant'Uffizio, Rome, St. St. I 3-i.

An (Imaginary) Immaculist Community

The essence of a nation, Ernst Renan wrote, relies on how individuals share certain memories, while also forgetting others.⁵¹ In the process of building this complex artifact, argued Benedict Anderson, the effect of printing technology is of crucial importance. In the early Modern period this was not less true, but other important media contributed in the production of memory and social identity. Painting was certainly one of them.

As we have already mentioned, the Roelas painting was sent to the court at the time when Philip III and the duke of Lerma received Bernardo de Toro and Mateo Vázquez de Leca in a private audience. On this occasion, the Sevilians presented to the king the request of the whole community. While the painting has traditionally been seen as an allegory of the theology of the Immaculate Conception, this, in my opinion, does not do justice to its intricacy. In fact, as I would like to argue, the painting does not make a case for “theology,” or not theology alone, but for the knowledge of it. It is not a mere recollection of the scriptural references of the favored dogma; what it says is that its theological obscurity had become part of the popular devotion of the city, and what is more important, that the king should listen to his people. The painting can therefore be understood as one more piece of a complex strategy devised by the Sevillian canons to intervene in the public sphere and generate “opinion” favorable to their interests (an aspect of Spanish politics of the time to which Michele Olivari has recently called attention).⁵² The printing press was no doubt one major instrument of this strategy. The visual arts, however, were no less crucial.

The painting’s message can be seen and read in the bells of the trumpet, where two quotations—one from the book of Ecclesiasticus, the other from the book of Proverbs—represent the cosmological idea: not that the Virgin had been born without original sin, but her condition: that her conception happened before sin had entered the world, before the world had been created—“nondum erant abyssi ...” (Prov. 8:25)—or even before time’s clock had been turned on—“ab initio et ante saecula creata fuit” (Eccl. 24:15).⁵³ It is this cos-

⁵¹ Ernst Renan, “Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?” [1882], cited in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd. ed. (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 199.

⁵² Michelle Olivari, *Avisos, pasquines y rumores. Los comienzos de la opinión pública en la España del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2014).

⁵³ The best, unfortunately short, analysis of the painting is in Jaime Cuadriello, “The Theopolitical Visualization of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception: Intentionality and Socialization of Images,” in *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World*, ed.

mic nature of the Virgin that is made visible in the upper part of the painting, with the book of the Seven Seals held by John the Evangelist at her feet, and the resplendent mirrors at her side showing two moments from the book of Genesis that her trans-historical existence anticipated: to her right the separation of light and darkness, to her left the Spirit of God hovering over the waters.⁵⁴

I do not have space here to disentangle the particulars of the painting's iconography, its numerous scriptural inscriptions, or the identity of the Fathers of the Church, prophets, and theologians shown in support of the dogma. The details just mentioned, however, should suffice to show the subtleties of the theological discourse in which the dogma would remain stalled until 1854. It was in confronting this problem that the Sevillian canons had deployed a much more intelligent and sophisticated tactic of defense. As we said before, the "Marian War" exploded as a reaction to a "maculist" sermon. The Dominican friar had strongly defended the opinion of Thomas Aquinas that the Virgin could not have been conceived without the macula of original sin, as this would have limited and therefore compromised the very reason for God's incarnation: the redemption of "All" humanity. No exception. While the Immaculist group's defense also played out in the scholarly arena, it was on the streets that the battle for the dogma took place.

In one of the paintings mentioned above, Miguel Cid, who was close to the Granada brotherhood, is shown holding the pamphlet with the "Coplas" or songs that he composed and had printed. With their catchy melody and simple lyrics, they were written, as the text says explicitly, for the children to learn at school, so that they could afterwards sing them in the streets or at home. The melody—as Pierre Civil has recently reminded us—was to be sung in the presence of an image of the Immaculate Conception very similar in its iconography to what had been previously created in monumental paintings, but now with an inscription in capital letters that identifies it as the "Inmaculada Concepción."⁵⁵ While these and other similar stories of popular devotion recorded in the chronicles have been seen as just one aspect of propaganda, a

Ronda Kasl and Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2009), 120–45.

54 I understand these not as shields, but as mirrors, or reflecting shields at least: they are not presented frontally to the viewer but surround the figure of the Virgin Mary, as if her nature were reflected in the "specula," allowing us to read in them her otherwise impenetrable mystical nature.

55 Pierre Civil, "Iconografía y relaciones de pliegos. La exaltación de la Inmaculada en la Sevilla de principios del siglo XVII," in *Las relaciones de sucesos en España (1500–1750)*, coord. Henry Ettinghausen, Víctor Infantes de Miguel et al. (Alcalá de Henares: Servicio de publicaciones de la Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, 1996), 65–78.

more elusive, and in my view more interesting aspect of this strategy has gone unnoticed. In the speech Seville's Catedral canon Bernardo de Toro gave at the court of Valladolid on August 28, 1615—a copy of which has been preserved in the National Library in Madrid—he not only reminded the king and his *valido*, the Duke of Lerma, of those “sinless angels” (“angelitos sin pecado”), as he called the children who were singing the “coplas” on the streets; he also rebutted the accusation that Immaculist supporters had severed the arm of a sculpture of Thomas Aquinas that presided over the entrance of the Dominicans' Sevillian college—a symbolic gesture, Toro and Leca interpreted, that the Doctor's opinions were hateful (“odiosa”). In an eloquent speech the Sevillian embassy even described to the king the effort of the Dominicans to distribute candy (“confituras”) to the same children in order to attract them to their convents, where they would teach them to say out loud that the Virgin “had been conceived with sin.”⁵⁶

Juan de Roelas's painting provides the most eloquent illustration of this declared war between the religious orders. If one of the bells of Fame is pointing upwards, the other one coils itself to have its message reach the “people” of Seville. As the inscription on the side says, it depicts a great procession that occurred in the city on June 29, 1615. The audience in Valladolid took place on August 19. The Dominicans had opposed the Immaculist confraternity carrying the image on the streets, but their opposition backfired (so Bernardo de Toro informed the king), and the people exploded with enthusiasm. The painting seeks to capture the moment in which the brotherhood's now-disappeared polychrome sculpture is paraded under a canopy or *pallium*, through an arch where two theologians who had championed the cause (Scottus for the Franciscans, Laynez for the Jesuits; the latter, by the way, one of the most important New Christians in the order and, in fact, a first-generation convert, for his father was Jewish) accompany the Virgin's triumphal entry into the city. Immediately underneath, the mass of Sevillians, comprised of secular as well as religious representatives, walk along with the sculpture. The scene has received almost no attention from scholars; at most it has been taken as “documentary” and therefore an objective depiction of the procession, both of which fall short to the complexity of the painting.

The painter was careful to depict all social strata: noblemen and clergy are mixed in a sort of amorphous mass. The most prominent place in the foreground—at both sides of the palm tree holding the monarchy's coat of arms—is reserved for children. Many of them are shown singing, some even holding sheets with printed songs like those composed by Miguel Cid discussed

⁵⁶ Joaquín Hazañas y de la Rúa, *Vázquez de Leca, 1573–1649* (Seville, 1618), 273–83 (BNE MS 4011), edits the entire text.

above. But their role, I would argue, is more than anecdotal. Two different aspects are worthy of analysis. First, they are all of a young age, not yet having reached puberty. Second, there are several black skinned children shown prominently in the front row. Another figure, a black friar (a Mercedarian?) and also almost a child, is strategically placed behind the image of Charity, the nursing woman.⁵⁷ I will begin with the latter and afterward turn to the seemingly unproblematic issue of these figures' age.

In the picture's foreground two young black children welcome the viewer into the composition.⁵⁸ The boy holds bronze plate with something like a little bell (?) on it, and a younger girl on his side. Their age and dress identify them as slaves.⁵⁹ Africans were of course numerous in the Seville of Archbishop Pedro

57 On representations of African blacks in Baroque Spain, see Luis Méndez Rodríguez, "Gremio y esclavitud en la pintura sevillana del Siglo de Oro," *Archivo Hispalense* 84 (2001): 243–56; Méndez Rodríguez, *Esclavos en la pintura sevillana del los Siglos de Oro*, (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2011); "Visiones iconográficas de la esclavitud en España," in *La esclavitud negraafricana en la historia de España, siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. Aurelia Martín Casares and Margarita García Barranco (Granada: Comares, 2010), 95–126. Carmen Fracchia, "(Lack of) Visual Representation of Black Slaves in Spanish Golden Age Painting," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 10, no. 1 (2004): 23–34; Victor Stoichita, "The Image of the Black in Spanish Art: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art: From the 'Age of the Discovery' to the Age of Abolition*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 191–234. See on drama, Baltasar Fra Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Siglo xxi, 1995), esp. "El Santo Negro Rosambuco de la Ciudad de Palermo," 77–101, for its paradoxical status.

58 For an introduction to the aesthetic responses to black skin in western art, see Joaneath Spicer, "European Perceptions of Blackness as Reflected in the Visual Arts," in *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe*, ed. J. Spicer (exh. cat. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2012), 35–60.

59 On slavery in Seville in the early modern era, see Alfonso Franco Silva, "La esclavitud en Sevilla entre 1526 y 1550," *Archivo Hispalense* 61, no. 188 (1978): 77–91. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media* (Seville: Diputación Provincial, 1979); Berta Ares Queija and Alessandro Stella, coords., *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos. Derroteros africanos en los mundos ibéricos* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 2000); Manuel F. Fernández Chaves and Rafael M. Pérez García, "La esclavitud en la Sevilla del quinientos, una propuesta metodológica en base a documentación parroquial (1568–1590)," and "La esclavitud en la Sevilla del quinientos: Reflexión histórica (1540–1570)," in *Marginados y minorías en la España Moderna, y otros estudios sobre Extremadura* (Llerena: Sociedad Extremeña de Historia, 2005), 113–22, 123–34. Manuel F. Fernández Chaves y Rafael M. Pérez García, "Las redes de la trata negrera (1560–1580)," in *La esclavitud negraafricana*, 5–34. Aurelia Martín Casares, "Evolution of the Origin of Slaves Sold in Spain from the Late Middle Ages till the 18th century," in *Shiavità e servaggio nell'economia moderna, secc. XI–XVIII/ Freedom and Slavery in the European Economy*, ed. Simonetta

de Castro. As is well known, this city was one the major ports for the slave market in Europe. The painting reflects this reality: according to one eyewitness, racial minorities ("todos los colores de gentes") were the first to enthusiastically join the festivities:

Then all brotherhoods insisted in making their feasts and celebrating their offices; all nations, even *people of all colors* [my emphasis]. Mulattoes [also] made their feast, which made Seville astonish; blacks made two [celebrations], and people were amazed as they had never seen anything so sumptuous before. What is more surprising is that Moors, men and women, asked for permission to celebrate their feast but they did not receive the permission.”⁶⁰

Interestingly enough, this witness looks into all ethnic minorities, including moriscos, with the category of skin color. Color has now become a primordial marker of otherness.⁶¹

But Juan de Roelas's painting is more than a mirror of Seville's society. Not only are blacks conspicuous in the composition, their role is not reduced to that of slaves. A dark skinned friar, as we have just mentioned, figures strategically in the middle of the canvas. This is striking, as black clergy would have probably been rare, the inverse of the leading role they have in the painting.⁶²

Cavaciocchi (Florence: Fondazione 'F. Datini' Prato, 2014), 409–30. We have not been able to consult, Alexis Bernard, "Les esclaves à Sevilla au XVIIe siècle," (PhD diss., Université de Lyon, 1998).

- 60 "Luego se empeñaron todas las cofradías en hacer fiestas y todos los oficios, todas las Naciones, y aun todos los colores de gentes. Los Mulatos hicieron una, que puso a Sevilla en peligro de quedar assombrada; los Negros hicieron otras dos, que de todo punto la asombraron porque no se ha visto tal sumptuosidad como la suya, lo que mas admira es, que los Moros y Moras, pidieron licencia para hacer su fiesta, no se les permitio." Diego Ortiz y Zúñiga, *Annales Ecclesiasticos*, year 1614. Citing Fray Pedro de San Cecilio, *Anales de la Orden de Descalzos de Nuestra Señora de la Merced*, (Barcelona, 1669). The source does not expand on why the permission was denied. One possibility, however, is that this was a reaction against the "Islamic" mariology present in the controversial Lead Books.
- 61 Medieval formulations of "moor" (moro/mouro) defined ethnicity mostly in terms of religion, language and political allegiance, but not of skin color. See for example the *Siete Partidas* (5:1438): "[m]oros son una manera de gente que creen que Mahomat fue profeta et mandadero de Dios." Cited in Josiah Blackmore, *Moorings. Portuguese Expansion and the Writing of Africa* (Minneapolis-London, 2009), 5. See for the shifting ideological agenda of the term, Ross Brann, "The Moors?" *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 307–18.
- 62 Most religious orders "refused to admit either blacks or mulattoes in their ranks," allowing them to become little more than "second-rate secular clergy whom they kept in a strictly subordinate position": C.R. Boxer, "The Problem of the Native Clergy in the Portuguese

In fact, the inclusion of black Africans under the protection of the Immaculate Virgin cannot be separated from the dialectics of “racial” exclusion that—as we saw at the beginning of this article—were played out in the debate on her purity. This tension, of course, did nothing but grow in the following decades.⁶³

One anecdote can illustrate this point while showing at the same time how it provoked the tension between the same religious orders whose conflictive protagonism we have followed with the debate of the Inmaculate Conception. Not long before our painting was made, in 1614, a fierce polemic had erupted between Dominicans and Jesuits about their missions in Ethiopia. The conflict was ignited with the publication of two books by Luis de Urreta, OP, in 1610 and 1611. Using some highly unreliable sources, the Dominican argued for the “Catholic” nature of the Abyssinian church, the orthodoxy of its traditions, and its dependence on Rome. Urreta’s book was considered to threaten the Jesuits’ missions in Africa, and so they soon responded.⁶⁴ The Jesuit Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa rushed to incorporate a whole new chapter into his book, which was almost in press, on their missions in Asia and Ethiopia.⁶⁵ The lengthy addition to his volume is a fierce attack on the Dominicans, whom he formally accused of “lying” [sic] in their description of the Religion of the Ethiopians. Interestingly enough, the crux of their debate was the ritual practices of the Abyssinian Church, among others the use of grape juice (*mosto*) for the sacraments of baptism and communion and, at the core of the discussion, the

and Spanish Empires from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries,” in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of Faith*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 85–106, esp. 104, Boxer, *The Church Militant and the Iberian Expansion 1440–1770* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 9.

63 That this presented a challenge for the missionary practice is also documented by ample evidence. At a time much closer to our case-study, the Jesuit Diego de Guzmán, writing from Seville sometime before 1606, in a letter addressed to General Aquaviva, used as evidence against the statute the memory of the Morisco Jesuit Juan de Albotodo, who preached in the Albaicín and whose lineage, according to Guzmán did not impede but rather strengthened his missionary activities. Markys, *The Jesuit Order*, 184.

64 Luis de Urreta, *Historia eclesiastica, política, natural y moral, de los grandes y remotos reynos de Etiopia, monarchia del emperador, llamado preste iuan de las Indias* (Valencia: Patricio Mey, 1610). Urreta, *Historia de la Sagrada Orden de Predicadores en los remotos reynos de Etiopia* (Valencia: Iuan Chrysostomo, 1611).

65 Suárez de Figueroa, *Historia y Anal relación de las cosas que hizieron los Padres de la Compañía de Iesvs, Por las Partes de Oriente y otras, en la propagacion del Santo Evangelio* (Madrid, 1614). There is an extensive literature on the Jesuit missions in Ethiopia. See most recently, Andreu d’Alós-Moner, *Envoyos of Human God: The Jesuit Mission to Christian Ethiopia, 1557–1632* (Leiden: Brill, 2015). On the scandal caused by Urreta’s book, see pp. 156–60, although the focus here is on the response to Pedro Páez’s *History of Ethiopia* (1622).

Ethiopians' practice of circumcision and whether this should be seen as a Judaic influence or—as a Dominican argued—the result of ignorance.⁶⁶ The question for us now is less the relative position of the orders on this matter—in fact, on this point the Jesuit and Dominican positions are reversed—than how prejudices deeply rooted in the history of Western Europe acted as lenses through which a different world, and its population, were seen.

As Thomas Cohen has shown, the debate on the introduction of purity-of-blood statutes in the Society of Jesus (decreed in 1593 and a milder version in 1608) often referred to the contradictions that such a policy would bring to its missionary efforts. In 1576, for example, Possevino eloquently reasoned that questioning the lineage of novices would complicate the admission of non-Europeans in the order in the colonies.⁶⁷ In fact, blacks presented a challenge when it came to applying categories of “limpieza de sangre.” Jurists like Solórzano Pereira (1644) or Escobar del Corro (1633), for example, agreed to confer to indigenous Americans a “purity status.” While recently converted, they were closer to the category of gentiles whose previous religion did not jeopardize Christianity.⁶⁸ African blacks on the other hand fell into a much more ambiguous category. In a document recently unearthed by María Elena Martínez, dated Seville, 1606, a “mulata”—the daughter of an Old Christian and an African slave—after describing her lineage, requested to be considered of pure blood, for “I and my son and my parents are and were Old Christians of clean caste and generation.”⁶⁹ As Martínez underlines, however, legal rights were far from clear at the time and, in any case, were evolving in the opposite direction. For example, unlike native Americans, Blacks fell under the jurisdiction of the Holy Office. Moreover, some Sevillian institutions, such as its Colegio Mayor, had expanded the list of categories of people denied acceptance to include, not only Jews and Moriscos, but also Blacks, Mulattos, and even *guanches* (but not Indians).⁷⁰ According to Martínez, the identification of “blackness” with “impurity” only increased during the seventeenth century.

66 “Y quanto al judaismo de la circuncision, guardar el sabado y ceremonias de la ley vieja, que siguen, que por la intencion por que lo hazian ... no tenian culpa alguna.” Suárez de Figueroa, *Historia y Anal relación*, fol. 422.

67 In Cohen's words: “Only a policy of inclusion would advance the missionary enterprise.” Cohen, “Jesuits and New Christians,” 36. See also, Thomas Cohen, “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity in Antonio Possevino's Memorial to Everard Mercurian (1576),” in *A Companhia de Jesus na Península Ibérica, Séculos XVI e XVII: Espiritualidade e Cultura*, ed. José Adriano Freitas de Carvalho (Porto: Universidade do Porto, 2004), 543–61.

68 María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 200ff.

69 Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 222.

70 Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 207.

It is not by any means coincidental that the year before the painting was sent to the court, on February 20, 1614, Pedro de Castro gave lengthy instructions to his Sevillian clergy regarding the baptism of the African slaves. Around the same time, he had a cathechism published especially written for the instruction of them.⁷¹ Nor is it an accident that this very important text is known to us only because it was transcribed in the book that the Sevillian Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval published in 1629 in this same city.⁷² *De instauranda Aethiopum salute*, as is well known, is one of the earliest, if not the first, treatises written in the defense of the Africans (but not against the practice of slavery, for which it was still too early).⁷³ Just as in Sandoval's book's frontispiece King Balthazar's piety and blackness are eloquently brought together (Fig. 10.15),⁷⁴ so in his instructions, Pedro de Castro ordered an investigation into whether the people from "Guinea, Angola y otras provincias de aquella costa de Africa" that had been brought to Seville—up to 10% of the population according to some sources (Ambrosio de Morales)—had been baptized.⁷⁵ If so, Castro wanted to know under what conditions and circumstances, and if they had been first

⁷¹ *Instrucción para remediar y asegurar quanto con la divina gracia fuere posible que ninguno de los negros que vienen de Guinea, Angola y otras provincias de aquella corte de Africa carezcan del sagrado baustimo*, (Seville, 1612–1614?). See, Francisco de Borja Medina, "La experiencia sevillana de la Compañía de Jesús en la evangelización de los esclavos negros en América," in *La esclavitud negroafricana*, 75–94 (who dates it 1614), after a copy in Rome (ARSI, FG 720/II/4). And, A. Martín Casares and Christine Delaigue, "The Evangelization of Freed and Slave Black Africans in Renaissance Spain: Baptism, Marriage, and Ethnic Brotherhoods," *History of Religions* 52 (2013): 214–35, who date it 1612 after a copy in the archive of the Abbey of the Sacromonte, Granada.

⁷² Alonso de Sandoval, *De instauranda Aethiopum salute* (Seville, 1629). I have used the modern Spanish translation, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud*, ed. Enriqueta Vila Vilar (Madrid: Alianza, 1987).

⁷³ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "La evangelización del esclavo negro y su integración en el mundo americano," in Ares Queija and Stella, *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos*, 189–206. R.L. Green, "Africans in Spanish Catholic Thought, 1568–1647: Beyond Jesuit Hagiography," *Black Theology* 11, no. 1 (2013): 96–116.

⁷⁴ See an insightful analysis of this image in Grace Harpster, "The Color of Salvation: The Materiality of Blackness in Alonso de Sandoval's *De instauranda Aethiopum salute*," in *Envisioning Others. Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela A. Patton (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 83–110.

⁷⁵ It has been calculated that in 1565, approximately 14% of the population of Seville were slaves. See Ruth Pike, *Aristocrat and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 172. However, according to Manuel F. Fernández Chaves and Rafael M. Pérez García ("Las redes de la trata negrera. 1560–1580") in this period there were 6,327 slaves which represented a 7,4% of Seville's population, while a total of 44,670, a 9,4% of the population in the archbishopric.



FIGURE 10.15 Alonso de Sandoval, *De instauranda Aethiopum salute*

Seville, 1629

DETAIL FROM THE FRONTISPICE

catechized. Castro also dismissed collective baptisms as useless and gave precise instructions on how to first proceed with their catechesis, insisting on the need to use interpreters, putting the Jesuit fathers at the Colegio de San Hermenegildo (again the Jesuits) in charge of this process. The bishop asked his clergy to give the new arrivals time and have patience, for African slaves, when they first arrive—the document says—are confused (“turbados”) and, in any case, they have little intellectual capacity (“son de corta capacidad”). Mission and race, in all the above-cited documents, seem part of one and the same equation. The painting that Juan de Roelas made for Archbishop Castro had them woven together, making one argument of spiritual brotherhood. I will now turn briefly to the second distinctive feature of the Sevillian crowd depicted in the painting.

Along with their racial diversity, the second surprising aspect of the community depicted in Juan de Roelas’s painting is the number of children, all of whom however are dressed as adults, either as nobles, secular clerics, or, most frequently, tonsured friars representing a variety of religious orders (with the Dominicans, obviously, excluded).⁷⁶ What is the relation of these children to the obscure dogma? That the mystery of the Immaculate Conception was self-evident to the simple or the innocent is a theory for which, as far as

76 While this would be expected in an era previous to the now famous “discovery of childhood,” which Philippe Ariès placed sometime in the seventeenth century, what we see here is, I think, very different, if not the opposite.

I know, there is only visual evidence. In Seville, in the middle of the previous century, Hernando Sturmio (Fig. 10.16), a Dutch artist established in the Andalusian city, painted an allegory of the Conception of Mary that seems to make a similar contention: in the allegorical tradition previously described the artist depicts Mary's parents, Joachim and Anne, from whose breasts springs a tree of pure lilies holding up Mary. The message would be clear only to those who were already familiar with it: that there had been no sexual intercourse between Mary's parents so that no sin stained her purity. To the right of the couple, there is a shepherd representing the unlearned *rudus*, and to the left, two young women, both representing "simple" folk, who while unable to understand the subtleties of the mystery, "intuitively" believe in it. This is what in theological jargon would be called *fides implicita*, that is, what Christians profess by virtue of their belonging to the church, without necessarily and explicitly being able to understand it.

At the beginning of the following century, Juan de Roelas's position looks slightly different, and much more sophisticated. The meaning of these "infant adults" can be unpacked with the help of a sermon of the Jesuit father Juan de Pineda published in Seville in 1615. Here again, date and author are important. As we saw at the beginning of this article, Pineda was threatened by the Inquisition for his support of the cause and openly accused of being a "marano"; it should therefore not come as a surprise that Pineda was later investigated by the Holy Office for his proximity to the Granada brotherhood. In fact, the Inquisition would do its best to remove Pineda's Immaculist printed works from circulation.⁷⁷ They would have had good reasons for it. Pineda not only

77 Pineda's response to the Holy Office is worth quoting: [Madrid, 17 de agosto de 1616] Joan de Pineda religioso professo de la comp^a de Jesus, digo que después de aver andado en manos de casi todo el Reyno, por diversas impresiones, que se fizieron, con estimacion i aplauso un privilegioso edicto del Sr Rey don Jn prim^o de Aragón cerca de la fiesta de la inmaculada concepción de la M[adr]e de Dios (como a V.S. es notorio) yo hize un breve tratado de advertencias sobre el dicho privilegio para servicio de Dios N. Sr., mayor devoción del pueblo cristiano, estimación y conocimiento de la gran cristiandad y devoción de los Sres Reyes de Aragón predecesores de la Magestad católica del Rey Nro Sr en que procuré declarar algunas razones de mucha consideración y piedad, que en el dicho edicto se apuntan; y assí mismo pretendí quitar alguna falsa opinión, que el vulgo, por no entender bien podía concebir, pensando era en perjuicio de la immunidad eclesiastica. Mas porque algunos con emulación y publicidad, y ofensión de muchos, an querido poner mácula en el dicho tratado, diciendo aver en el doctrina reprobada, la qual yo entiendo ser muy conforme a la que enseña la Sta Iglesia Romana y sagrados canones; como también assí lo an juzgado, y como tal aprobado casi todos los theologos más doctos, y desapasionados de Andaluzía i Castilla, y de las universidades de Salamanca, Alcalá, Osuna, Granada, Sevilla, como puede constar a V.S. por sus firmas originales, y autenticas,



FIGURE 10.16 Hernando de Esturmio
Allegory of the Immaculate Conception
1555
COLLEGIALE CHURCH OF OSUNA

que mandandolo V.S. puedo presentar; de mas del dicho tratado dio el consejo Real de Castilla, que con esta presento a V.S. suplico a V.S. para mayor amparo y defensa de la verdad; y atento a la merced y favor que el supremo consejo de la santa general inquisicion me hizo, mandandome le sirviese en la obra y edicion del catalogo espurgatorio, por espacio de tres años, y despues por otros tres o quatro continuando el dicho servicio en este tribunal, en lo que V.S. a sido servido mandarme con la diligencia, legalidad y zelo, que a V.S consta, y se puede entender mi deseo de servir como devo a V.S. y a las cosas de la Fe; V.S. se sirva hacerme merced y favor, assi en mandar, si fuese necesario, y V.S. juzgase convenir se examine con todo rigor y atencion ell dicho tratado por personas doctas y desapasionadas, para que si por ignorancia oviese errado, y me desengañe, como estoy presto, y deseoso de hazerlo. Como tambien, que no hallando V.S. otra cosa que sana y piadosa doctrina, y zelo del mayor servicio de nro Sr y devucion de su Sm^a Madre, V.S. mande dar su amparo y favor no solo contra las comminaciones y inquietud publica, que la emulacion de algunos a causado contra mi tratado y persona, mas tambien haziendome md de informar al Illm^o Sor Cardenal y Consejo Supremo, al procurador agente de la Inquisicion en Roma, Sor Cardenal Çapata protector de Espana, y al Padre General de Nr^a Comp^a, y a quien mas a V.S. parezca convenir, de la verdad que V.S. constare en este caso, assi de no aver resultado inconveniente alguno del dicho tratado, ni de su doctrina aprobada, y

provided the theological and historical argumentation for the cause but seems to have been behind its popular strategy.⁷⁸

A large part of his sermon—one of the first to be printed in the city during the crisis—not only presents children as a proof of how deep the devotion had taken root in the city of Seville. What he also says is that in their “innocence” children were speaking the arcane mysteries of theology:

And do not dare to discredit the opinion of the common people [el vulgo] ... do not bother them, nor offend them, do not scandalize, upset or affront them: as God frequently speaks through their voice: *Vox populi*.⁷⁹

It is in the light of Pineda’s arguments that I think the whole painting begins to make sense, and with it, much of the agenda of the Sevillian authorities. The learned and the rude, white Old Christians and African slaves, skilled theologians and the ignorant all speak with one and the same voice. What is more interesting, though, is the painting’s argument as to how this was to come about. If I understand the painting correctly, the claim that it makes is that this is not only expressed in the subtleties of Scripture but it is transmitted from mother to child, in some way, possibly even biologically. Two different details of the painting articulate this idea, with which I would like to conclude this article.

“Hermanos de leche”: Towards a Conclusion

In “Purity and Danger” (1966), in discussing the “exaggerated importance attached to virginity in the early centuries of Christianity,” Douglas recalls the challenge that the primitive church faced in following St. Paul’s “extraordinary

alabada de tantos, como del zelo y legalidad que en si se a conocido y experimentado en el respecto y reverencia con que siempre e acudido a servir en lo que en este tribunal se me a mandado, y en qualquiera otra cosa tocante a la fe. En lo qual hara V.S servº a Nro Sr, favor a la verdad, y a mi muy gran merced. Sevilla. 7. de agosto de 1616. Joan de Pineda [rubricado]. AHN Inq. 2957/2.

78 Juan de Pineda, for example, was chosen by Archbishop Castro to deliver the sermon at Seville’s cathedral on the occasion of the “Juramento” to the Conception on December 8, 1617: *Relacion del solemne juramento, que el Ilmo Don Pedro de Castro i Quiñones, Arçobispo de Sevilla, i su insigne cabildo ecclesiastico, i la muy noble i real ciudad de Sevilla hizieron en el ocho de diciembre de 1617* (Seville: Francisco de Lyra, 1617), fol. 10.

79 Juan de Pineda, *Sermón ... en el primer día del octavario votivo a la Inmaculada Concepcion de la Santissima Virgen Madre de Dios, Señor Nuestra, que la insigne cofradía de la Santa Cruz de Ierusalem de los Nazarenos celebro en la Iglesia de San Antonio Abad en Sevilla a los 26 de Abril de 1615* (Seville, 1617), 16.

demand" that Christian society be built across previous social boundaries. After quoting Gal. 3:28, where Paul describes the community of baptized as one in which "there can be neither Jew, nor Greek," Douglas writes:

The idea that virginity had a special positive value was bound to fall on good soil in a small persecuted minority group. For we have seen that these social conditions [systems built on internal contradictions] lend themselves to beliefs which symbolize the body as an imperfect container which will only be perfect if it can be made impermeable ... The idea of woman as the Old Eve, together with fears of sex pollution, belongs with a certain specific type of social organization. If this order has to be changed, the Second Eve, a virgin source of redemption crushing evil underfoot, is a potent new symbol to present.⁸⁰

As an extension, if not a rephrasing of this same argument, I have proposed that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception emerged in seventeenth-century Seville as the model for a "New Eve," one whose "impermeable" purity went beyond virginity. As we have already seen, this new symbol corresponded not only to Seville's conflictive "social order" but also to the city as a reflection of Spain's global empire, which was deeply mired in social, religious, and even spiritual contradictions.

The production of the symbol of the New Eve was therefore not only one of theology, less of Mariology, but also one of society's structure and boundaries. Under this light, not only the importance Juan de Roelas put into representing Seville's society becomes much clearer, but also certain circumstantial elements of its composition become now meaningful. These reflect on motherhood as a model for society.

First, in the middle of the canvas Saint Catherine of Siena is holding a shield with two inscriptions. On the border, a quotation from Isaiah reads: "[and] the boy shall be delighted in the breasts, over the asp" (Isa. 11:8–9). The quotation refers not only to the mother's milk—*de-lactus*—but also to his or her triumph over sin. In the middle of the shield, we read "En la leche lo mamé" ("In the milk I suckled it"), obviously referring to the dogma. More interesting is the narrative image of the nursing woman in the foreground to which I have called attention at the beginning of this article, who is holding her son in prayer as if joining the rest of the children in their singing (Fig. 10.17). The image has more than an anecdotal meaning.

⁸⁰ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2002), 195.

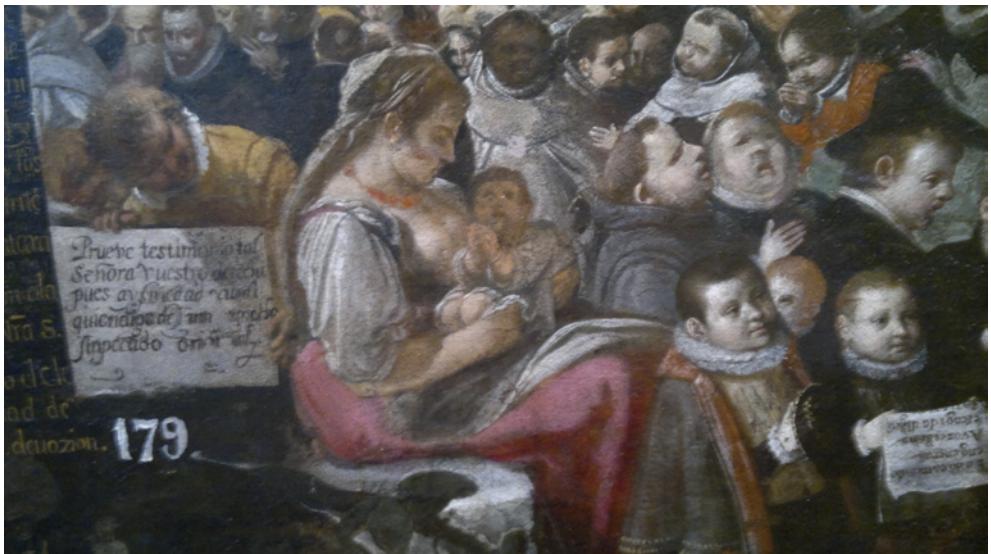


FIGURE 10.17 Juan de Roelas
Allegory of the Immaculate Conception
(detail)

Breastfeeding is of course far from being a neutral symbol, and in this context less so than in any other. The nursing mother had traditionally been used as a symbol of the virtue of charity, and even of the Church itself.⁸¹ This had deep scriptural roots: in a not completely obvious passage (1 Cor. 3:2), Saint Paul had compared the preaching of the Gospel to milk given to “fleshly children in Christ” (“parvulis in Christo”), children that he described as still too “carnal” to fully understand its message.⁸² Roelas’s painting makes this same allegory visible in the mist of Seville’s daily life.

We should first recall that milk was physiologically explained in continuity with blood.⁸³ As far back as Galen and up to the period under discussion, milk

⁸¹ Von Max Seidel, “Ubera Matris: Die vielsichtige Bedeutung eines Symbols in der Mittelalterliche Kunst,” *Städels Jahrbuch* 6 (1977): 41–98. I thank Nino Zchomelidse for this reference.

⁸² 1 Cor. 3:2: “Brothers, I couldn’t speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to babies in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for you weren’t yet ready. Indeed, not even now are you ready, for you are still fleshly. For insofar as there is jealousy, strife, and factions among you, aren’t you fleshly, and don’t you walk in the ways of men?”

⁸³ For example in Fray Luis: “Porque la leche es sangre y en aquella sangre la misma virtud del padre, que vive en el hijo, nace la misma obra;” (*La perfecta casada*). Sebastián de

had been widely thought to be the same fluid as blood, only cooked and transformed in the breasts of the mother. Given how particularly loaded the symbol of blood was in Iberia, the milk-as-blood principle had of course its particular challenges, for example when it came to the practice of wet-nursing.⁸⁴ The Third Lateran Council's (1179) prohibition against Muslims or Jews breastfeeding Christian children, for example, was implemented in Castile, first in the "Siete Partidas" (1265).⁸⁵ and after by the Cortes of Valladolid (1258) and of Jerez (1268). This legislation, apparently, did not stop the practice, but the prejudice persisted.⁸⁶ As one Franciscan friar put it in 1589: "One should take care not to choose a Morisca nor a Jewess as a wet nurse for a child of Old Christians, because their blood still tastes of the beliefs of their ancestors."⁸⁷

Beginning in the early sixteenth century, however, both doctors and moralists (from Erasmus to Antonio de Guevara or Luis Vives) insisted on the importance of maternal lactation, giving breastfeeding a new inclusive social value. There was a long history for this. In his *Politics*, Aristotle (Arist. Pol. 1252b18) had referred to inhabitants of the same city as "homogálaktes" (*ομογάλακτες*)—literally "those who suckle from the same breast." It does not come as a surprise that in the Renaissance breastfeeding usually became a symbol for cultural heritage. Juan de Valdés, for example, paired breastfeeding with the idea of the "mother tongue" (*lengua materna*) constructing in this way a new image of national allegiance.⁸⁸ But this would also give way to a powerful social paradigm,

Covarrubias describes milk as "leche cocida que naturaleza envía a las tetas de la hembra;" (*Diccionario*, 1611).

84 Emilie L. Bergmann, "Milking the Poor: Wet-nursing and the Sexual Economy of Early Modern Spain," in *Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Eukene Lacarra Lanz (New York, London: Routledge, 2002), 90–114.

85 "Ningún judío ni judía non sea osada de criar fijo de Cristiano o de Cristiana; et el que lo fiçiere peche cinquenta maravedíes al rey, et non lo faga más": *Fuero Real*, Lib. IV, tit. II. Leyes 3–4. Cited in Becky Rubinsteïn, "El Poema de Alexandre: Matiz de un conflicto: Lactancia/Limpieza de Sangre," in *Heterodoxia y ortodoxia medieval. Actas de las Segundas Jornadas Medievales*, ed. Concepción Abellán et al. (Mexico: Universidad Autónoma, 1992), 101–10. For its relation to medieval concepts of "race," see John Edwards, "The Beginnings of a Scientific Theory of Race? Spain, 1450–1600," in *From Iberia to Diaspora: Studies in Sephardic History and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 179–96.

86 Rebecca Lynn Winer, "Conscripting the Breast: Lactation, Slavery and Salvation in the Realms of Aragon and Kingdom of Majorca," *Journal of Medieval History* 34 (2008): 164–84.

87 Juan de Pineda, *Diálogos familiares de la agricultura cristiana*, cited in J. Caro Baroja, *Las formas complejas de la vida religiosa* (Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores, 1999), 309 (this Juan de Pineda is not to be confused with the Sevillian Jesuit mentioned before in this article).

88 "todos los hombres somos más obligados a ilustrar y enriquecer la lengua que nos es natural y mamamos en las tetas de nuestras madres, que no la que nos es pegadiza y que aprendemos en libros." *Diálogo de la Lengua*, cited in Emilie L. Bergmann, "Language and

one that could be used as an alternative to the “blood” model of religious and political identity.

None other than Cervantes, in *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, tells the famous story of a Morisca who is caught in a “berberisco” (berber) ship who uses this argument in her defense.⁸⁹ The lady—the daughter of Sancho Panza’s friend Ricote—is named “Ana Felix,” which is in my opinion far from being random, as it refers to Mary’s conception in Anne’s womb. Ana is found dressed as a man and sharing the ship with Muslim sailors. When interrogated, the extremely beautiful and charming girl tells her captors that although her mother was Morisca, they were all Christians in her family, so that “I suckled in the Catholic Faith through [my mother’s] milk” (“mamé la fe católica en la leche”). Milk here no longer denotes a racial stain but becomes in fact the opposite, a symbol of integration.

It is along these same lines that I think our painting needs to be understood (the whole origin of the “Immaculate debate” could be seen from this perspective). I see no particular reason to read the image of the woman in the foreground as belonging to one concrete ethnic group. However, the location of the black boy, immediately behind her, dressed in the habit of a Mercedarian friar, along with several other black-skinned boys distributed throughout the foreground of the painting, is in my opinion significant. The juxtaposition of the image of “Faith,” if not the Church, suckling from the mother’s breasts, along with the multi-racial composition of his global empire, envision for Philip III some sort of a political utopia, a universal community of “homogálaktoi,” to use again Aristotle’s term, of citizens nursed from one and the same milk. This ideal Republic—a reflection of the Heavenly Jerusalem, as seen in the framed painting held by King David, Mary’s royal ancestor—is put under the protection of the “Immaculate” Mary, whose own Conception exceptionally excluded the carnal transmission of original sin and therefore blood corruption, while her motherhood was inclusive and universal.⁹⁰ In sum, the Catholic Monarchy is presented in the painting as a community—in the words Saint Paul used

“Mother’s Milk”: Maternal Roles and the Nurturing Body in Early Modern Spanish Texts,” in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yahne (London: Aldershot, 2000), 105–20.

⁸⁹ Second part, chap. LXIII. I thank James Amelang for this reference, and access to his interesting reflections on the topic in *The Reformed Spaniards: Tales of Conversion in 1620s London*, paper presented to the Shelby Cullom Davis Center, History Department, Princeton University, Sept. 27, 2013.

⁹⁰ It is interesting that in the banner of King David there is an ermine, a symbol of purity but also a well-known childbirth amulet.

when preaching to the Corinthians—that is watered with spiritual milk instead of carnal blood.

At a time and place increasingly obsessed with the purity of blood (we need only recall that thousands of Moriscos left the Peninsula departing from Seville in the years immediately before the episode that I am now trying to reconstruct), the painting designed by the Sevillian canons represents both the ambitions and the contradictions of Spain's global empire. Guiding Pedro de Castro, the members of the Granada brotherhood, and the archbishop's Jesuit advisors—this is at least my hypothesis—was the urge to produce a new symbol, one of a perfect and impermeable body, a new “natural symbol,” to use the term coined by Mary Douglas, that responded to the internal contradictions of the social system in which it was grounded. Mary's genealogically virginal body both projected the need to recompose Seville's fragmented political body,⁹¹ on the one hand; while on the other it reflected the society's anxiety about how its boundaries were threatened.⁹²

That the people behind this fantastic allegory and its message related their defense of the doctrine to the reform of the Church should only open a whole new set of questions. Nevertheless, the fact that beginning in 1616 the Immaculate cause escaped the limits of the local and became a national symbol for the Spanish monarchy only speaks to the Sevilians' capacity to understand and one is tempted to even say visualize what could be called—using the language of theology—“the signs of the times.” [Luke 12:54–59].

⁹¹ This is in fact what *symballein* means, to “put in contact.” In his 1611 dictionary, in order to explain the term, Sebastian de Covarrubias brings up the Greek story of the broken coin, the two parts of which come together in perfect unity after having been separated. Along those same lines, the story here runs opposite to that told by Margaret R. Miles, *A Complex of Delight: The Secularization of the Breast, 1350–1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

⁹² Both extremes, in my opinion, have to be simultaneously taken in consideration. For the Immaculate Conception in relation to the notion of blood “purity,” see, most recently, Estrella Ruiz-Gálvez Priego, “Du Peché originel au Péché des origines: Évolution et socialisation de la notion de ‘macula’” (Espagne XIII^e–XVII^e siècles), in *L'Immaculisme. Un imaginaire religieux dans sa projection sociale* (Paris: Indigo, 2009), 98–141. This line of inquiry is explored fully in Rebecca Quinn Teresi's doctoral dissertation (John Hopkins University, in process).

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